

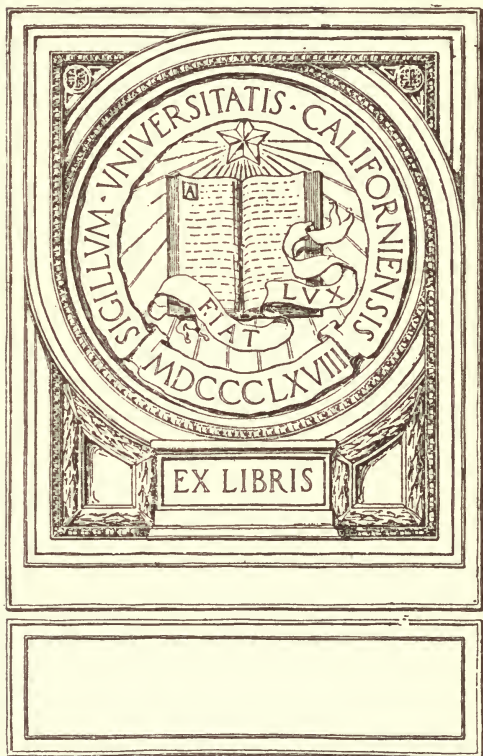
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# REMARKS

AND

## CRITICISMS

ON THE

HON. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS'S

## LETTER

TO THE

HON. HARRISON GRAY OTIS.

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BOSTON:

PRINTED BY JOSHUA CUSHING;

No. 79, State Street.

1808.

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## PREFACE.

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AS a great number of gentlemen have expressed a wish to see the remarks and criticisms on the Hon. Mr. ADAMS's letter republished in the pamphlet form, the following compilation is offered to the publick, taken principally from the NEW-YORK EVENING POST.

It is left to literary men to decide whether the Honourable Senator has not been overrated as a scholar; and to politicians, whether he has not disappointed them as a statesman.

If he has been flattered, admired and trusted beyond his merit, it has been his misfortune; and if all is now left that justly belongs to him, he cannot complain.

*History Alumni*



## REMARKS, &amp;c.

WE have been urged to take notice of the Letter published by Mr. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, but our attention was so much occupied by the election as to put it out of our power. We hope the Honourable Writer will forgive this involuntary neglect. In the remarks which we deem it proper to make, a due regard shall be paid to his double character, as Professor of Rhetorick, and Senator from Massachusetts. We shall endeavour to avoid saying what might offend, and should there be a semblance of asperity, we humbly entreat the pardon of the Honourable Senator; confidently expecting that the learned Professor will excuse us for being seduced from the chastity of our own principles by the influence of his example.

We shall divide what we have to say into two parts, the first of which shall be confined to the Learned Professor, and the second to His Honour of the Senate. It may be supposed that we might have spared the first half of our labour; but we are not certain that Mr. Adams considers his manner as less worthy of notice than his matter, or would recommend to our imitation his conduct more strongly than his style. Both will no doubt find admirers; for already, if we are well informed, this specimen of reasoning and rhetorick has been circulated with no common industry.\*

He who thinks only of the present hour, or the present generation, omits much of what he owes to his country. The true patriot will not be unmindful of posterity. In the humble wish, therefore, to serve those who are yet at school, we shall point out defects of style in this extraordinary letter,

\* It is said that Mr. Adams's party, the Jeffersonians, have been at the trouble and expense of circulating 100,000 copies throughout the United States.

which, like the spots on the surface of the sun, if they do not diminish the light, by no means increase the splendour.

Although the number may appear great, it might have been increased, had we not rejected some which we supposed to have been errors of the press. We should be sorry to impute to the learned Professor the follies or the faults of a printer's devil. Still, however, it is possible that some of our remarks ought to have been directed towards the work of the latter. But as the defects of great men have been imitated, from the wry neck of Alexander downwards, it seemed proper to note (by way of caution) those deformities which might be copied. We proceed without further preface to take them up in course nearly as they stand.

Evidently the Professor's subject, grave, didactic, and addressed to the people, required a natural, plain, perspicuous, neat style, and nothing more; neither demanding ornament, nor hardly admitting it. Instead of this, however, he has adopted a style of the opposite character; inverted, obscure, harsh, and turgid; glittering with far-fetched and sometimes with false figures.

It is well observed by one of our best English criticks, "that communication of thought being the chief end of language, it is a rule in composition, that perspicuity ought not to be sacrificed to any other beauty whatever. Nothing in language ought to be more studied than to prevent all obscurity in the expression; for to have no meaning is but one degree worse than to have a meaning that is not understood." Want of perspicuity may proceed from a wrong choice of words, or a wrong arrangement of them, or a wrong arrangement of the members of which a sentence is composed. In the letter before us we shall find an abundance of instances of a want of perspicuity arising from one or other of all these causes.

One error against perspicuity is the giving different names to the same object mentioned more than once.

"If the commercial states are *called* to interpose on one hand, will not the agricultural states be with equal propriety *summoned* to interpose on the other; if the east is *stimulated* against the west, and the northern and southern sections are *urged into collisions* with each other, by appeals," &c.

Here no less than four different terms are employed to express the same act: *called*, *summoned*, *stimulated*, and *urged into collision*.

In like manner, a question is said to have been "*discussed* and *decided* in the Senate," to have "*obtained the concur-*

rence of the other branch of the legislature," and "the *ap-  
probation* of the president," and then that "from *these deci-  
sions*, the letter of Mr. Pickering was an appeal," &c. Near  
the close of the pamphlet the Professor says, "To *yearn* for  
the *fragments* of trade would be to *pine* for the *crumbs* of  
commercial servitude." In the course of four pages, Mr. Pick-  
ering's Letter is called by more than a dozen different names.  
It is *an appeal, a proceeding, a species of appeal, an invocation, a  
representation, a statement, an admonition, an application, an  
instigation, a one-sided representation, a resort, an appellate  
legislation, a proclamation, a denunciation.* Ye conundrum  
makers! whose labours dignify our almanacks, and exercise  
the ingenuity of children and servant maids, cease, for the  
Professor of Rhetorick of Harvard College beats you all.

In his second sentence the Professor is guilty of an inaccu-  
racy in using "some friend of the writer," instead of "wri-  
ter's." Had he been speaking of the wife of the writer, it  
would have been proper, merely substituting *the* instead of  
*some*.

"The subjects of this letter are the Embargo and the dif-  
ference in controversy between our country and Great Bri-  
tain."

We understand what is meant by a difference between two  
countries or two men. It is a familiar, though not an ele-  
gant term to convey the idea of a dispute. We understand  
also what is meant by a matter in controversy, viz. some-  
thing which is disputed. But we have no precise idea of  
what is meant by a difference or dispute in controversy. It  
seems pretty much like a fight in battle.

"Subjects upon which it is my misfortune (in the discharge  
of my duties as a Senator of the United States) to differ from  
the opinions of my colleague."

To differ *from* an opinion is an improper expression; un-  
less the writer meant to inform us that he is himself a differ-  
ent thing from an opinion. The usual mode of speech is, to  
differ *in* opinion with a person, or to dissent *from* his opinion.  
The phrase has another impropriety. The words which stand  
in a parenthesis, restrain the writer's assertion (that he held  
different opinions from his colleague on certain subjects) to  
those occasions in which he appeared as a senator; where-  
fore it may be implied that such difference ceased as soon as  
he left the senate chamber: in short, that it was a sort of re-  
gimental dress, which he put on to attend the senate, and  
took off when he came home.

"The writer, with the most animated tone of energy, calls  
for the interposition of the commercial states."



To speak *with* a tone, means an affected or particular manner of speaking, not usual or proper. We presume the learned Professor's idea would have been better conveyed, had he said, The writer *in* the most animated tone. We suppose, too, the words "animated tone" were intended to convey the idea of a lively or earnest manner; but we cannot guess what is meant by the most animated tone of *energy*. Has energy various tones, some of them more animated than others?

"They must have been compelled either to act upon the views of this representation, without hearing the counter-statement of the other side," &c.

By views of a representation is meant (as we suppose) the views of him who made the representation. But we do not perceive what is meant by being compelled to act *upon* those views, unless the word *upon* be considered as synonymous with *conformably to*, or *according to*. Had he said to act on the representation, it would have conveyed the idea with more perspicuity.

"The *counter* statement of *the other side*" might pass as an expression of one of Mr. Adams's newspaper eulogists, but seems too palpable a pleonasm for a Professor of Rhetorick.

"The very object and formation of the national deliberative assemblies, was for the *compromise* and conciliation of the interests of all."

To compromise the interests of a nation is to put in danger. If this was indeed the object for which our Congress was formed, there can be no doubt that by laying the embargo, they laboured in their vocation. But the writer (we believe) meant that these assemblies were instituted to compromise the differences, and conciliate the interests. Some fashionable writers have lately used the French *compromit* in place of the English *compromise*, but even if we take this last word to express only the *settling amicably* (which is one of its meanings) the phrase above cited will remain incorrect.

"Whenever the case occurs that this sense should be clearly and emphatically expressed, it ought surely to be predicated upon a full and impartial consideration of the whole subject, not under the stimulus of a one-sided representation."

We do not understand what is meant by a sense predicated *under* a stimulus. We can guess what is meant by "predicated upon," which we suppose was intended for *of* (in consequence of) a full and important consideration. We guess also that by "one-sided representation," was meant the representation made by those who maintain one side of the

question. We think nevertheless that one-sided representation is a lop-sided expression.

“Should the *occurrence* upon which an appeal is made “from the councils of the nation to those of a single state, “be one upon which the representation of the state has been “divided.”

We readily conceive that division can take place, and appeal be made, upon a *question*; but how either is to happen upon an *occurrence*, is not so clear.

In the same section it is said,

“Some notice of such intention should be given to him, “that he *too* might be prepared to exhibit his views of the “subject, upon which *his* differences of opinion had taken “place.”

The writer we suppose meant that he might be prepared to exhibit those views of the subject which led him to differ in opinion. A and B may differ in opinion; in which case there will be a difference (of opinion) between A and B. But this difference belongs neither to A nor to B.

“The fairness and propriety of this course of proceeding “must be so obvious, that it is difficult to conceive of the pro- “priety of any other. Yet it prevents another inconve- “nience.”

We should be glad to know what this last *it* refers to.

“When one of the senators from a state proclaims to his “constituents that a particular measure or system of measures “which *has* received the vote and support of his colleague “are pernicious and destructive,” &c.

This we confess, from a Professor of Rhetorick, is rather beyond any thing we could have expected. Avowedly addressing a laboured composition to the people of the United States, he violates one of the first rules of syntax; he not only makes the verb disagree with its nominative case, but employs one verb in the singular and one in the plural, and forces them into an alliance with the same noun—a measure which *has* received *are* pernicious! Nor is this the only instance in which the Professor breaks Priscian’s head. He says (p. 20) “It is but a little more than two years, since this question was agitated both in England and America, with as much zéal, energy and ability as ever *was* displayed,” &c. And in page 23, “If the *voice* of reason and of justice could be heard, *they* would say.”

“The advocate of a policy thus reprobated must feel him- “self *summoned* by every motive of self-defence to vindicate “his conduct: and if a general sense of his official duties

“ would bind him to the industrious devotion of his whole  
 “ time to the publick business of the session, the hours which  
 “ he might be forced to employ for his own justification,  
 “ would, of course, be deducted from the discharge of his more  
 “ regular and appropriate functions.”

In the democrattick newspaper copies of this letter, we find  
 “ *challenged* by every motive,” &c. which we presume is a  
 revision and amendment of the writer’s.

This is the first time we ever heard of motives sending challenges or summonses ; and, of all the motives in the world, that of self-defence is the last we should have suspected. Here the writer violates a rule of composition, by crowding into one period different and entire thoughts ; thus joining in language what is separate in reality. The period should have closed at “conduct.” As to his “discharge of a function,” we have no idea of what is meant by the “discharge of a function.” There are, we know, certain parts of the body whose functions it is to discharge ; but the things thus discharged are not called functions. If the writer by function meant duty, he was mistaken. The epithet *appropriate* also is misapplied. The words *appropriate* and *proper* express different ideas. The former, derived from the verb *to appropriate*, that is, to consign to some particular object or use, bears with it (as a participial adjective) the meaning of the root. Thus, to speak in appropriate terms is to use the words which custom has consigned to the subject spoken of. The last objection we have to this sentence is its redundancy ; which will be abundantly evident if we express the same ideas with simplicity and precision, thus :

‘ And if his sense of duty would have bound him to devote  
 ‘ his time to the publick business, this vindication must infringe  
 ‘ upon the more regular and proper employment of his hours.’

What do we miss here but about one half the words employed by the Professor ?

In the same paragraph we find, “Nor can I forbear to *remark* the tendency of such antagonizing appeals to distract,” &c. This should be *to remark on* or else *to notice*. “Antagonizing appeals !” “That’s a vile word, *beautified*’s a vile word.” When our Professor shall attain to the authority of a Johnson in literature, he may perhaps venture upon coining a word to express some idea not already provided with an expression ; but when he does, we hope he will discover a little more taste and a little better ear than he has in the aforesaid *antagonizing*. If we guess rightly his meaning, *antagonistical* would have come nearer the idea he meant to convey. We object, too, to his new word *closure* (page 11) as it is at



best a superfluous word, and has no support in analogy. *Inclosure* is a place inclosed ; how can *closure* mean the act of closing ? But it is so *Jeffersonian* to make new words, that Mr. Jefferson's new disciple could not resist the temptation to ape his master.

A little farther we find " mutual asperities and rancours ;" which last word is not to be used in the plural. The paragraph closes by informing us that if a certain course be pursued,

" The great concerns of the nation would degenerate into the puny controversies of personal altercation."

The altercation of controversies, or the controversies of altercation, are very like the debates of debate. But how are the great concerns of a nation to degenerate into personal controversy or altercation ? That debates on such concerns, when managed by persons of a certain description, may so degenerate, is proved by experience ; but the nature of the concerns themselves is not thereby changed. If the Congress should spend half a year in prattling like children about war, they would not thereby convert war into children's play.

" In developing my own views, &c. some very material differences in point of fact as well as of opinion, will be found between my statements and those of the letter, which alone can apologize for this."

Here the violent separation of the pronoun *which* from its antecedent, leads to a wrong sense. The writer meant to say, that the differences between his statements and those of the letter, only, (but not "*alone*") constitute his apology. A still more violent separation is found in page 10, where the antecedent to *they* ["they were announced"] is to be hunted for, and at length is actually hunted up in a preceding paragraph.

" Far more pleasing would it have been to me, could that honest and anxious pursuit of the policy best calculated to promote the honour and welfare of our country, which, I trust, is felt with equal ardour by us both, have resulted in the same opinions, and have given them the vigour of united exertion."

Without stopping to inquire what we are to understand by the pursuit of a policy resulting in an opinion, we shall merely observe that the Professor, by using the auxiliary verb *could have*, instead of *had*, has conveyed a different meaning from what he intended to. It should have been, "*had* that honest and anxious pursuit," &c.

" In our republican government, where the power of the nation consists alone in the sympathies of opinion, this re-

“ciprocal deference, this open-hearted *imputation* of honest intentions, is the only adamant, at once attractive and impenetrable, that can bear unshattered all the thunder of foreign hostility.”

We have transcribed this beautiful metaphor that we might have an opportunity to express the pleasure it gives us. We wish another term had been substituted for *imputation*, which is seldom used in a good sense. We impute evil, we attribute good, and ascribe both. We shall not examine how far the power of a nation consists in sympathies or in opinion, because our present business is to consider only the language. We cannot however forbear observing that we have no precise notion of what is meant by the sympathies of opinion. The fellow-feeling of opinion is a matter beyond our reach. “*Attractive adamant!*” attractive *amber* we have heard of; but we never heard before that adamant attracted. The Professor, however, is as great a philosopher, we infer, since his intimacy with Mr. Jefferson, as we know him to be a rhetorician; so we let that pass; especially as the Professor, we are happy to observe, must be perfectly indifferent to all attacks upon him or his language; for, after declaring as above, that this “reciprocal deference,” &c. “is the adamant that can bear unshattered *all the thunder of foreign hostility*,” in the next sentence, he informs us that he himself possesses a shield made of it; he says, “*he* has extended it to every department of the government.”

“I know indeed enough of human nature to be sensible that vigilant observation is at all times, and that suspicion may occasionally become, necessary *upon* the conduct of men in power.”

Suspicion *upon* the conduct, is not English. Neither is suspicion *of* the conduct, correct. We may suspect men of improper designs or actions, and we may suspect their conduct to be the result of improper motives. The expression of “vigilant observation upon the conduct” is also incorrect. A discerning man may not unfrequently make shrewd observations on the conduct of others, but observations (in this case) means remark. In the other case, we say observation *of*, not *on*.—The idea which the writer intended to convey may be expressed thus: “Vigilant observation of the conduct of men in power is necessary at all times, and suspicion may become so occasionally.”

The writer adds,

“But I know as well that confidence is the only cement of an elective government. Election is the very test of con-



“ fidence, and its periodical return is the constitutional check upon its abuse.”

To what does the word *its* refer? The last antecedent is confidence; but the periodical return of confidence cannot be a check upon the abuse of confidence. Neither can the periodical return of elections be a check on the abuse of elections. The ambiguity might have been avoided by using election in the plural, and saying, “ elections are the test of confidence, and their periodical return is the check on its abuse.” Let it however be noted that “ its return ” and “ its abuse,” instead of “ the return ” and “ the abuse of it,” are not accurate.

The writer goes on thus :

“ For the exercise of power, where man is free, confidence is indispensable.”

A thing may be indispensable *to* the exercise, but not *for* the exercise.—He adds,

“ And when it once totally fails—when the men to whom the people have committed the application of their force, for their benefit, are to be presumed the vilest of mankind, the very *foundation* of the social compact must be *dissolved*.”

This expression may be excused in a gentlemen who has travelled to the confines of Russia, where palaces are sometimes (it is said) built on the ice, for the very foundation of such palaces may be dissolved; but in our country the solution of a foundation is no common event.

“ Towards the gentleman whose official station resulted from the confidence of the same legislature by whose appointment I have the honour of holding a similar trust, I have thought this confidence peculiarly due from me; nor should I now notice his letter, notwithstanding the disapprobation it so obviously implies at the course which I have pursued in relation to the subjects of which it treats, did it not appear to me calculated to produce upon the publick mind impressions unfavourable to the rights and interests of the nation.”

This sentence contains almost as many errors as could well be accumulated in a single period.

Certain things may be due *by* one person *to* another, but not *from* one person *towards* another. Whether confidence be one of those things, is a different question.

Again: Impressions are *made*, not *produced*. To produce *upon* is to generate or beget: but a letter does not seem to be the proper instrument for acts of this sort, neither do such acts usually beget impressions. The turgid and superfluous

phraseology employed merely to say that Mr. Pickering and himself were chosen senators by the same legislature, is nothing less than ridiculous. It is a rule, that during a period the scene ought to be continued without variation. The changing from person to person, from subject to person, or from person to subject, within the same period, is not allowable. In the above period the scene is changed upon us no less than four times; from subject to person, from person to subject, from subject to person again, and lastly from person to subject.—This is intolerable. Thus in the following sentence, (page 30)

“ For, as submission would make us, to all substantial purposes, British colonies, her enemies would unquestionably treat us as such, and after degrading ourselves into voluntary servitude to escape a war with her, we should incur inevitable war with her enemies, and be doomed to share the destinies of her conflict with a world in arms.”

In this sentence the scene is changed from subject to person, and from person to person. To avoid this blemish the idea might be expressed thus: For as by submission we should, to all substantial purposes, become British colonies, and unquestionably be treated by her enemies as such, we should, after degrading ourselves, &c. incur inevitable war,” &c.

“ For my opinions (though fully persuaded that even where differing from your own they will meet with a fair and liberal judge in you) *yet* of the publick I ask neither favour nor indulgence. Pretending to no very extraordinary credit from the authority of the writer, I am sensible they must fall by their own weakness, or stand by their own strength.”

The word *yet* should be omitted, as will readily be perceived if the phrase be read without the parenthesis. The personification of opinions is rather too strong a figure, although opinion (in the singular number) considered as a powerful agent in national affairs, may be personified, especially by a poet. It is, also, doubtful whether the writer meant to ascribe unpretending modesty to his opinions, or to himself. If the latter, the phrase would have been more perspicuous, as well as more correct, had it stood thus: “ I am sensible that they can derive no extraordinary credit from the authority of the writer, and must fall,” &c.

“ Tenfold as many millions of the same property would have been at this moment in the same *predicament*, had they not been saved from the *exposure* to it by the embargo.”

We know what it is to be exposed to danger, but we have never before heard of being exposed to a predicament.

“ And we know that of these *all-devouring instruments* of rapine, Mr. Rose was not even informed.”

An all-devouring instrument! Truly, if you go on at this rate, Mr. Professor, you will rival that ambitious poet who threatened with his head to knock out all the stars.

“ If the alarm was groundless, it must very soon be disproved, and the embargo might be removed with the danger.”

Putting aside mistakes in the tenses, we should be glad to know how an alarm is to be *disproved*. We believe the idea of the writer would have been conveyed by saying, “ If the alarm was groundless, it must soon have subsided, and, the apprehension of danger ceasing, the embargo might be raised.”

“ I have believed, and do still believe, that our internal resources are competent to the establishment and maintenance of a naval force, publick and private, if not fully adequate to the protection and defence of our commerce, at least sufficient to induce a retreat from those hostilities, and from a renewal of them, by *either* of the warring parties.”

A retreat by *either* of the parties does not convey what we suppose to have been the writer's meaning; and secondly, a retreat from hostilities is not English. It is an example of the Jeffersonian, or hurly-burly style, in which words are rattled out like dice, as if to try whether chance can make a sentence. A retreat is, the act of retiring before superiour force, from one *place* to another, not from one *act* to another. But hostilities are the acts of an enemy. To say, therefore, that a warring party retreats from hostilities, is to say that he retires from his own actions.

“ I am not sufficiently confident in the superiority of my own wisdom to appeal, by a *topical application*, to the congenial *feelings* of any one; not even of my own *native section* of the Union.”

“ Topical application” is a surgical term; and means something applied to a particular part of the body: such for instance as a corn-plaster to the toe. We believe this to be the first time that a topical application to the *feelings* was ever thought of. It is equally difficult to conceive how an *appeal* can be made by topical application, and how such applications can be made to the *feelings*: unless indeed metaphorically, to the corporal feelings. A blistering-plaster to a man's buttocks is a topical application, and would excite feelings, wherefore it might be called an application to his feel-



ings : To make an "appeal" however by such an application would be somewhat of a novelty. But further, it appears the writer will not appeal to the feelings of *any one*, not even of his own native section of the union. "Any one" means any person ; wherefore from the structure of the sentence it follows, that the section is an individual man or woman. The phrase too, "native section of the union," appears inelegant, at least, if not improper.

"If it (the embargo) should prove ineffectual for the purposes which it was meant to secure, a single day will suffice to unbar the doors."

We cannot secure a purpose. We can effect a purpose, and thus having obtained something, we can afterwards secure the acquisition.

"Should we, by a dereliction of our right at this momentous stride of encroachment, surrender our commercial freedom without a struggle, Britain has but a single step more to take."

The first question which presents itself here is, how the dereliction (the utter abandonment) of a right, can amount to the positive surrender of our freedom. The next question is, what the writer means by a *momentous* stride. Momentous is weighty, and (by metaphor) important. Thus we say momentous period. But we cannot pile metaphor on metaphor, wherefore a momentous stride must mean a weighty stride, which is but an odd kind of stride. Admitting however, that momentous may stand for long or large, or any thing else which can properly be applied to a stride, still we cannot make dereliction *at* or *to* a stride, however large or long.

"Yet these orders—thus fatal to the liberties, for which the sages and heroes of our revolution toiled and bled—thus studiously concealed until the moment when they burst upon our heads."

Wonderful orders! Orders which, like bombs or pumpkins, burst on people's heads. We have heard of cruel orders, wicked orders, bloody orders, and God knows how many other sorts of orders, but never till this blessed day did we meet with "bursting orders."

"It is not however *in* a mere omission, nor yet *in* the history of the embargo, that the inaccuracies of the statement I am examining have given me the most concern ; it is *in* the view taken of the question between us and Britain."

The word *in* should have been *by* ; for we believe the writer meant to say that the inaccuracies complained of gave him concern *by* the omission, *by* the history, and, above all, *by* the view.

“ A moment extremely critical of pending negotiation, upon all the points thus delineated.”

A moment of pending negotiation is rather a strained expression, but let it pass. We cannot however so easily pass the delineation of points. A mathematical point, having no parts, cannot be marked out by lines; and points in controversy, a metaphorical expression, will not submit to a metaphor taken from painting, and suffer themselves to be delineated. The points in a controversy may be expressed, stated, advanced, but are not to be delineated. Besides, the separation of the noun from its possessive case is awkward and harsh; of which a similar instance occurs page 5. “ The whole truth *can be discerned* of questions,” &c. This might do in the writings of a humble editor of a daily newspaper, but is inadmissible in that finished style to be expected from a Professor of Rhetorick of Harvard College.

“ This formal abandonment of the American cause, this summons of unconditional surrender to the pretensions of our antagonist, is in my mind highly alarming.”

We do not make a summons of surrender. The summons of the besieger requires the besieged to surrender. We may be said to surrender to our antagonist, when we acknowledge his unfounded pretensions, but we do not surrender to the pretensions. Thus the use of the wrong preposition occurs in a sentence noticed in our last. “ The disapprobation it so obviously implies at the same course,” &c. Disapprobation of a course may be properly enough expressed, but not *at* a course: “ *dissatisfaction at*” is sometimes used.

“ If the right was claimed and exercised while our vessels were navigating under the British flag, it could not authorize the same claim when their owners have become the citizens of a sovereign state. As a relict of colonial servitude,” &c.

We presumed at first that the word relict was relic in the manuscript, and that relict was an error of the press; but we observe it is relict in all the newspaper, as well as pamphlet copies. Now a *relict* is a widow. It would have been better to have used the term remnant. Relic is seldom found in the singular, and is usually applied in a solemn and religious sense, as the relics of a saint or departed friend. There is a grammatical error also in the formation of the phrase, which should be either, *they cannot authorize the same claim, now that their owners have become*, or *they could not authorize the same claim when their owners became*.

“ Is it meant to be asserted that this claim and exercise

“constitute a right? If it is, I appeal not only to the warm  
“feelings, but cool justice, of the American people, &c. against  
“the assertion of it.”

We do not appeal *against* an assertion, nor even against a decree; we appeal *from*. This impropriety, however, is not the greatest objection we have to the above sentence. We will allow the author his warm feelings, if he pleases, for such seems to have been the case with him in an eminent degree, when he wrote this far-famed Letter; but we can never allow him to talk of *cool* justice, notwithstanding the pretty verbal antithesis it makes as it stands. We say cool judgment, because judgment may be so or not; it may be precipitate or deliberate; it admits of degrees: but justice is always the same; and we can no more say cool justice, than we can cool truth or cool falsehood.

“The question is, whether he has a right to *seize* them  
“*forcibly* on board of our vessels while under contract of ser-  
“vice of our citizens.”

To seize is to take by force; and a thing done forcibly is a thing done by force: therefore, to “seize forcibly” is to take by force by force. This may be called a strong, or rather a double-fortified expression. Contract of service of our citizens, should be *with* our citizens. A man does not contract *of*, but *with*.

“It is taking under *colour* of *fair pretence* our own native  
“American citizens, which constitutes the most *galling ag-*  
“*gravation* of this merciless *practice*.”

The colour of a pretence is very like the shadow of a shade. There are circumstances which aggravate an accusation, but we know not of any thing which can aggravate a practice.

“If the nature of the offence be *considered* in its true *co-*  
“*lours*, to a people having a just sense of personal liberty  
“and security it is in every single instance of a malignity  
“not inferior to that of murder.”

That is to say, an offence which, considered in its true colours, is of a malignity equal to murder to a people. A common man would have said, an offence, which, viewed in its true colours, will appear of a malignity, &c. We do not consider a thing *in* a colour, neither does the nature of a thing depend on our manner of considering or looking at it. An object is what it is, but may appear differently when seen in different points of view.

“There are even *examples*, I am told, *when* such officers  
“have been put upon the yellow list.”

*When* relates to time, and cannot properly refer to exam-  
ples.



“The impressed native American citizens, however, upon  
 “duly authenticated proof, are delivered up. Indeed! How  
 “unreasonable then *were* complaint! How effectual a remedy  
 “for the wrong!”

To express the writer's idea, the word *were* should be *is*, and the word *a* should be *the*. He exclaims, ironically, are they indeed delivered up! then to be sure it *is* unreasonable to complain; not, it *would be*, which implies the condition *if* they are delivered. A remedy means in general any remedy; but in order to form a relation to the particular remedy before mentioned, the phrase should end with the words *is this*. There is also a fault in the connexion of the two exclamations. Both of them are ironical, wherefore the latter amounts to a denial that the remedy is effectual. It follows, nevertheless, a phrase in which the efficacy of the remedy is presupposed. The writer's idea may be expressed thus: “Indeed! with a remedy so effectual, how unreasonable to complain!”

“An American vessel bound to a European port has two,  
 “three or four native Americans impressed by a British man  
 “of war.”

This is a vulgarism, which we should suppose might have been avoided by a professor of rhetoric. The verb *to have* is either used as an auxiliary for the tenses of other verbs, or else it expresses possession. If taken in the former sense, the sentence means, an American vessel has impressed by means of a British man of war, and in the latter sense it means, an American vessel possesses seamen impressed by a British man of war: whereas the author meant to say, Two, three or four native Americans are impressed by a British man of war, from an American vessel.

“Sometimes their Lordships, in a vein of humour, &c.  
 “Sometimes in a *sterner tone*, they say,” &c.

Is a *vein of humour* then a *stern tone*?

“Sometimes they coolly return that there is no such man  
 “on board the ship; and what has become of him, the ago-  
 “nies of a wife and children, in his native land, may be left  
 “to conjecture.”

The Professor's meaning may and must “be left to conjecture,” for it has hitherto eluded all our attempts to discover it. Perhaps the Professor intended this as a fine stroke of his art; supposing, as one of our critics observes, that a vague and obscure expression is apt to be admired by some, because it conveys the sense they relish the most; by others as concise and comprehensive, because it suggests various meanings at once.

"The second point upon which Mr. Pickering defends the pretensions of Great Britain," &c.

We do not defend a person upon a point, but against a charge. We say (metaphorically) defend on this or that ground or principle, but then we speak of the means of defence; of the *justification*, not of the *charge*.

"The right, as on the question of impressment, so on this, it surrenders at discretion."

Here is a harsh inversion; besides, the words *so on this* should be left out, or else the sentence should run thus: As on the question of impressment, so on this, it surrenders the right.

"Mr. Fox had too fair a mind for either, but his comprehensive and liberal spirit was discarded with the cabinet which he had formed."

To discard is to throw a card out of the hand, and thence it is used metaphorically for the dismissal of a servant or officer. But as we do not *discard* but *throw up* the whole hand, so we do not discard but dismiss the whole cabinet. Above all, we do not discard a spirit.

"Her rule of the war of 1756, in itself and in its effects, was one of the *deadliest poisons* in which it was possible for her to *tinge* the weapons of her hostility."

We do not "*tinge in*," but *with*, and we do not tinge with *poison*, but with colour or flavour. We *imbue* with poison.

"This accumulated mass of legal learning," &c, "was also made a subject of full and deliberate discussion, in the senate of the United States."

An "accumulated mass" is of a kin to his "*reciprocal offer to be searched in return*," "*offensive resistance*," "*counter-statement of the other side*." The Professor is always upon stilts; always labouring to exalt his style, and swell a common idea into an extraordinary bulk by adjuncts, expletives, and pleonasms. After all, we do not understand what the Professor means by saying this mass was discussed in the senate.

"I am not one of those who *deem* suspicion and distrust in the highest order of political virtues."

*Rank* is the proper word to be used here, not *deem*.

"These alternations of licenced pillage, this eager competition between her and her enemies for the honour of giving the last stroke to the vitals of maritime neutrality, all are justly attributable to her assumption and exercise of this single principle."

We may give a wound to the vitals, and we may give a stroke or a blow to a man, not *to*, but *over*, *on*, or *in* a particu-



lar part, as the head, the arm, the eyes, &c. We do not exercise a principle, we exercise a right founded on a principle.

"The rule of the war of 1756 was the root from which all the rest are but suckers, still at every shoot growing ranker in luxuriance."

A sucker springs from the trunk or branches, and a sprout from the root.

"The most enormous infractions of our rights, hitherto committed by France, have been more in menace than in accomplishment."

What is meant by "an infraction *in* menace" and "*in* accomplishment?" A right may be violated *by* menace, viz. the right of security; but a violation *in* or *by* accomplishment! The accomplishment of what? Is it of a promise, or a project, or a threat? The writer, we presume, means that France has violated our rights more by her threats than by carrying those threats into execution; which hitherto, thank God, she has not been able to effect.

"The alarm has been justly great; the anticipation threatening; but the amount of actual injury small."

The anticipation is supposed to have been made by us of the mischief we should experience, and therefore it must have been *terrifying*, not *threatening*. Actual injury is opposed to apprehended injury, but is slipt in here to express damage. Injury has two meanings, one of which is, wrong without damage. Thus, when a scoundrel tells lies of one honest man to another who does not believe him, he injures the person slandered, though he does him no damage. It is, in all humble manner, submitted to the learned Professor, whether the injury done to our rights by France is not as great as possible, although the damage to our property may have been far less than she wished and intended."

The grand finale of this paragraph runs thus:

"It is not by the *light* of blazing temples, and amid the groans of women and children, perishing in the ruins of the sanctuaries of domestick habitation at Copenhagen, that we can expect our remonstrances against this course of proceeding will be *heard*."

Bravo! now that, in our course of perfectibility, we have got so far as to hear by the light, we may hope soon to see by the sound, and feel by the smell. But perhaps the learned Professor meant that we could not *expect* by the light and amid the groans: for such is the natural interpretation of the words as he has placed them. A person less studious of or-

namient would have said, We cannot expect *that* our remonstrances will be heard amid the groans, &c. After all, it may be worth one moment's inquiry, what Copenhagen has to do with the business; which we understand to be a remonstrance to the Court of St. James's, against taking our vessels when going to or coming from the French Islands. A remonstrance (by the by) which might well be omitted, seeing that the evil to be remonstrated against does not exist. But the groans at Copenhagen, or even the cannonade, would hardly prevent people from hearing in London.

“The attack upon the Chesapeake was disavowed; and ample reparation was withheld only because with the demand *for* satisfaction *upon* that injury the American Government had coupled a demand *for* the cessation of others, alike in kind, but of *minor aggravation*.”

We make a demand of satisfaction *for* an injury, and not *for* satisfaction *upon* an injury. Minor aggravation is less increase of weight. So, then, there were injuries alike in kind, but of less increase of weight. Be not alarmed, gentle reader. The learned Professor meant only to say injuries of inferior magnitude. But every body could have said that; men of extraordinary genius and learning must say things in an extraordinary manner. Were it otherwise, how could they effect the important purpose of making the vulgar gape and stare? The object of some men, upon some occasions, is not to convince, but to confound; of course, the more incomprehensible, the better.

“The great *obstacle* which has always *interfered* in the adjustment of our differences with Britain.”

Pray how can an obstacle interfere, that is to say, interfere or meddle? An obstacle may obstruct, or impede, or prevent, but it cannot interfere. Let us, however, see what is this great obstacle. We are told, it is that she refuses “the application to us of the *claim* which she *asserts* for herself.” To assert is to claim, and therefore to assert a claim, is to claim a claim, or assert an assertion. We presume it was intended to say, that she asserts or claims a right. But this it seems she refuses to *apply* to us. And yet, if we understand the gentleman, the grievances he complains of are consequences of that very application to us of the rights she claims or asserts. We believe he meant to say, she refuses to acknowledge in us, the right she claims for herself.

“When that atrocious deed was committed, *amidst the general burst of indignation which resounded from every*

"part of this union, there were among us a small number of persons who undertook," &c.

Here the Professor violates that rule of composition, which directs us never to place a circumstance between two capital members of a period, because, to do so, leaves it doubtful to which of the two the circumstance belongs. The following is the only proper arrangement:

'When that atrocious deed was committed, there were among us a small number of persons, who, *amidst the general burst*, &c. undertook," &c.

"These ideas, &c. were *persisted in*, until the disavowal of the British government took away the necessity for *persisting in* them."

We persist and persevere in designs. We form, maintain, inculcate, adhere to, insist on, ideas and opinions.

"A liberal *and* a hostile policy towards America are among the strongest marks of distinction between the political systems of the rival statesmen of that kingdom."

Here the Professor has conveyed a different meaning from what he intended, by using the conjunctive *and* instead of the disjunctive *or*.

"Not only are all the outrages of Britain to be forgotten, but the very assertion of our rights is to be branded with odium."

To brand (to mark with a hot iron) is used metaphorically for affixing disgrace or infamy, but we cannot brand with odium. Hatred is so far from disgracing, that not unfrequently it proves the talents and virtue of those against whom it is directed. The learned Professor's new friends honoured his father with their hatred.

"Every phantom of jealousy and fear is evoked. The image of France, with a scourge in her hand, is impressed into the service."

We doubt whether the verb to evoke be English. The substantive evocation (called forth) is an English word, and if the verb be used, it must apply in the same sense. Of course, it will here express the calling forth of what really exists not—a phantom, a non-existence.

"Is American pillage one of those rights which she has claimed and exercised until we are foreclosed from any attempt to obstruct its collection?"

We do not collect rights nor pillage. Besides, pillage cannot be a right, even though the right to pillage were admitted. American pillage means plundering by Americans, or what Americans have gained by plunder; but we do not complain of *American*, but of *British* pillage.



“After degrading ourselves *into* voluntary servitude,” &c.

A person may be degraded *by* or *in consequence of* something done or suffered. He may also be degraded *from* the rank he previously held, to an inferior state or condition.

“It [the Embargo] has dashed the philter of pillage from the lips of rapine.”

It grieves us to have to find fault with this beautiful figure, which has been more admired perhaps than any thing in the Professor's whole performance. But, “*fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*”

Similes, saith the critick, are not the language of a man in his ordinary state of mind ; but when elevated or animated by passion, he is disposed to elevate or animate all his objects ; he avoids familiar names, exalts objects by circumlocution and metaphor, and gives even life and voluntary action to inanimate beings. In this heat of mind, the highest poetical flights are indulged, and the boldest similes or metaphors relished. Our Professor, doubtless, experienced all this, and perhaps more, when he invented the above descriptive personification of the embargo. But there are certain rules for figurative writing, which cannot be transgressed with impunity ; and the Professor should have recollected that even the poets have not the privilege of altering the nature of things, and bestowing attributes upon a subject to which they do not belong. Now the embargo, being a mere withdrawing from action, can never, by any force of imagination, be supposed to possess the power of *dashing* or striking. To test the correctness of his figure, let us suppose the Professor to have varied the phrase a little, and to have expressed himself thus : “The tortoise, by drawing his head within his shell, *dashed* the love-inspiring beverage from the lips of those gnats who had been regaling on his blood.” There is, we fear, hardly any imagination quite ductile enough to be brought to accommodate itself to this.

Here we close our remarks on those blemishes, which, sanctioned by such high authority, might become the objects of imitation. We are persuaded that the learned Professor, if he would take that trouble, could point out many which have escaped our notice. By so doing, he would greatly add to the obligation he has conferred on his fellow citizens.

The following, to the commencement of the remarks on the "Honourable Senator," is from the *New-England Palladium* of April 22.

FEW men, in our country, have had so great advantages in their early education as Mr. Adams, and few have been more industrious in their subsequent cultivation of letters. Hence it was natural that he should have the reputation of an accomplished scholar, and that his style should be, by many, considered as a model of fine writing. In whatever pertains to the belles lettres, his claims to pre-eminence have not been questioned, and his authority in matters of taste and criticism, has been *inconsiderately* admitted as conclusive. In the reviews, journals, and newspapers, of our own country, he has been regarded as a literary Hercules, who was to be kept in good humour by flattery, rather than provoked by criticism; and those who have spoken of his productions, (which have hitherto passed in this country without examination) have expatiated on their beauties, with a seeming consciousness that nothing else could be found.

As Mr. Adams has declared, in this letter, that it was intended for publication, it doubtless received much of the "*lîmæ labor*," and may be considered as a fair specimen of his style and manner of writing. From his situation, as Professor of Oratory, &c. at our university, no less than from the political character of the letter, he probably expected it would undergo a strict scrutiny, and was careful to entitle himself to the praise of fine writing, though his reasoning should fail of the wished-for success.

As a statesman, the excellencies or defects of Mr. Adams's style are of little importance; but as an officer of our university, whose duty it is to instruct others in the *difficult* art of writing well, they are worthy of some examination. I intend, therefore, to make some remarks on this letter as a mere literary performance, and if I should disturb the prejudices of his admirers, they may take their satisfaction by proving me in the wrong.

It is a common fault with very young writers to be diffuse, and of course feeble. It is pardonable in them, because they are young. The "*Sesquipedalia verba*," and the grand, swelling period, are very apt to charm their ears, and they rarely fail to keep the *sound* up, though the *sense* may *falter*. It is not to be expected that they should understand with much precision the force of words, or should use no

more than were necessary to express their meaning ; but it is to be expected, that the Professor of Oratory should be able to write his own language, not only with grammatical correctness, but with propriety, perspicuity and elegance.

The following are instances of what may be called the *verbose*, or amplified style :—

“ Towards the gentleman, whose *official station results from the confidence of the same Legislature*, by whose appointment I have the honour of holding a similar trust,” &c.

Mr. Pickering and Mr. Adams were chosen senators by the same state legislature ; this is the *single grain of wheat*, and the rest is chaff.

Again—“ And if his *general sense of his official duties* would bind him to the *industrious* devotion of his whole time to the *publick* business of the session,” &c.

Not a little skill and discrimination are required in the choice of epithets, and much of the force and beauty of style depend on their proper use. In the above quotation there are four adjectives, all of which might be dismissed without injury to the sentiment. It is true, that they make the sentence more sonorous, though they add nothing to its meaning, nor serve to mark the ideas with greater precision. Stripped of its verbosity, the sentence might stand thus—“ If, from a sense of duty, he should be induced to devote his whole time to the business of the session,” &c.

I will quote one or two more sentences of the same character, and leave them without remark :

“ Nor can I forbear to remark [upon] the tendency of such *antagonizing\** appeals to distract the *councils of the state in its own Legislature*, to destroy its influence, and expose it to derision in the presence of its sister states, and to produce between the colleagues themselves mutual asperities and *rancours*, until the great concerns of the nation would degenerate into the *puny* controversies of *personal* altercation.”

QUERY—How could the great concerns of the nation degenerate into puny controversies? The Professor intended to say that the members, in place of being occupied with great concerns, would be busied in puny controversies ; and again, is not the last sentence gross tautology? To test this, we will reverse it, and it will *read as well*, “ Into the puny altercations of personal controversy.”—It is indeed better, though bad.

\* That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase—*Antagonizing* is a vile phrase.  
POLONIUS.



In the following sentences, verbosity is not the only fault :

“ The *answer* to War in Disguise was ascribed to a gentleman whose talents are *universally* acknowledged, and who by his official situations had been required *thoroughly* to investigate every *question of conflict* between neutral and belligerent rights,” &c.

Every question between neutral and belligerent rights is a conflicting question ; but what is a question of conflict ? There are questions of law, of fact, of right, of expediency, &c. ; but what is a question of conflict, but a question whether there is a conflict or not ?

“ This *accumulated* mass of legal learning, of commercial information, and of national sentiment, from almost every inhabited spot upon our shores, and *from one extremity of the union to the other*, confirmed by the unanswered and unanswerable memorial of Mr. Monroe to the British minister, and by the *elaborate* research and *irresistible* reasoning of the examination of the British doctrine, was also made a subject of *full* and deliberate discussion in the senate of the *United States*.”

I do not believe, though Mr. Adams asserts the fact, that the senate of the *United States* were employed in deliberately discussing *this accumulated mass of legal learning*, &c. which came from almost every inhabited spot on our shores, and *also* from one extremity of the union to the other, *confirmed* as it was, &c. &c. The senate, I grant, might have been employed in discussing the subjects, the questions, which, in various parts of the country, had produced, or called forth, this mass of learning, &c.

Again—“ If the alarm *was* groundless, it *must* very soon be *disproved*, and the Embargo *might* be removed with the danger.”

Here is some confusion among the tenses, and still more in the sentiment. The writer meant to say, that if the alarm was groundless, it would very soon appear to be so, and the embargo might then be removed, &c. but he has contrived to assert the contrary, by saying, that if the alarm was groundless it must very soon be disproved, i. e. proved to be real, or to have good foundation, and the embargo might be removed, &c.

Again—“ The most enormous *infractions* of our rights, hitherto committed by her (France) have been more in *me-  
nace* than in accomplishment.”

If a spectator, in giving an account of a personal combat, should say, in a letter to his friend, that the most terrible

blows A gave B were more in *menace* than accomplishment, he would write like the Professor of Oratory.

“ In the mean time Admiral Berkeley, by a court martial of his own subordinate officers, hung one of the men taken from the Chesapeake, and called his name Jenkin Ratford.”

Mr. Adams does not positively assert that the man was tried, but merely that Admiral Berkeley *first* hung him by a court martial, and called his name Jenkin Ratford *afterwards*.

Again—“ But whenever the case occurs that this sense, &c. it ought surely to be *predicated upon* a full and impartial consideration of the whole subject—not under the stimulus of a one-sided representation, far less *upon the impulse of conjectures and suspicions.*”

The word “*predicated*” is here used improperly. Mr. Adams, no doubt, is a logician as well as a rhetorician, and well knows that the *predicate* is that which is affirmed of the subject in a proposition. It is here used as synonymous with *founded*, which is a perversion of the true meaning of the word. As to the *stimulus* of a one-sided representation, and the *impulse* of conjectures, &c. they may pass for this time without remark.—“ Without hearing the *counter statement of the other side.*”<sup>\*</sup>—And from whence should the counter statement come, if not from the other side?

“ Between this unqualified submission, and *offensive* resistance against the war,” &c.

Resistance implies a previous aggression, and what is the exact difference between *offensive* resistance and *defensive* aggression?

*Figurative language.*—“ In our republican government, where the power of the nation consists alone in the sympathies of opinion, this reciprocal deference, this open-hearted imputation of honest intentions, is the only *adamant* at once attractive and impenetrable, that can bear, unshattered, all the thunder of foreign hostility.” This sentence, spoken at a college exhibition, would be followed by loud and reiterated applause. It is a most imposing sentence, and becomes the mouth well; but it has, nevertheless, a trifling defect. Rhetorical writers inform us, that metaphors, comparisons, &c. are founded on some resemblance, expressed or implied: but where is the resemblance between reciprocal deference, or even open-hearted imputations of honest intentions, and *adamant* attractive as well as impenetrable?

<sup>\*</sup> This reminds us of the advertisement of a London Cobler—“ *Moved over opposite to t’other side of the way.*”

Query, Which side of the way did the Cobler live?



“ It (the Embargo) has dashed the *philter* of pillage from the lips of Rapine.”\* If, after an attentive consideration of this rhetorical flourish, the reader can make nothing of it, let him apply to the Professor of Oratory for information.

*Bad Grammar.*—“ It is but little more than two years since this question was agitated both in England and America, with as much zeal, energy and ability, as ever *was* [were] displayed,” &c.—“ If the voice of reason and of justice could be heard by France and Spain, *they* would say”—Who would say? France and Spain? They form the last antecedent; but that makes nonsense. Is it voice? That is in the singular, and cannot be the antecedent to *they*. Is *voice* to be understood before the word justice? So be it.—“ Because with the demand for satisfaction *upon* that injury”—“ and omission sacrifices no national right.” From the perusal of several preceding paragraphs, it seems at least probable, that Mr. Adams intended to say, that Mr. Pickering’s omission to notice the British orders of council, sacrifices, &c.—“ And on such a sudden unnoticed interdiction, of pouncing upon all neutral commerce,” &c. Travelling back a few sentences it appears, that it is the right which the British claim of pouncing, &c.—“ Yet although thus unauthenticated, and even although thus in some sort denied, the probability of the circumstances under which *they* were announced,” &c. N. B. The antecedent to *they* is in the preceding paragraph.

*Mistakes of the Printer.*—“ Every phantom of fear and jealousy is *evoked*,” for *invoked*. The imaginary terrors of Napoleon—or which is the same thing, Napoleon’s imaginary terrors—for our dread of Napoleon’s power, &c. “ We examined it chiefly *as* affecting the principles *as* between a belligerent and a neutral power”—one *as* too many.

I will now quote a few sentences for the consideration of scholars, and leave them without remark.

“ Sometimes they coolly return, that there is no such man on board the ship: and what has become of him, the *agonies*† of a wife and children in his native land, may be left to conjecture.”—“ The wisdom of the Embargo is a question of great but transient magnitude, and *omission*‡ sacrifices no national right.”—“ Subjects *upon which* it is my

\* BAYES—“ Now mark that allegory! is not that good!?”  
Yes—that grasping a storm with your eye, is admirable!

† Mark that delightful personification!

DELLA CRUSCA.

‡ Another! by all that’s beautiful!

ANNA MATILDA.

“ misfortune, in the discharge of my duties as a Senator of the United States, to differ *from the opinions* of my colleague.” “ The place where the question upon the first of them, in common with others of great national concern, *was, between him and me*, in our official capacities, a proper subject of discussion, *was* the Senate of the Union.” “ It is not *by the light* of blazing temples, and amid the groans of women and children perishing in the ruins of the *sanctuaries* of domestick *habitation* at Copenhagen, that we can expect our remonstrances against this course of proceeding *will be heard*.”

Speaking of his attempt to controul the embargo, Mr. Adams observes, that “ he is not sufficiently confident in the superiority of his own wisdom to appeal *by a topical application*\* to the congenial *feelings* of any—not even of his own native section of the Union.”—*Ohe ! jam satis est*.

I might pursue this subject much further, but from the preceding specimens of Mr. Adams's style, there is little hazard in saying generally, that it is verbose and obscure. His sentences are often ungrammatical, and their structure inartificial and confused. They are frequently loaded with circumstances, unskillfully introduced, and enfeebled with tautologous expressions. In his choice of words, he lacks that delicate discrimination, so necessary to express the different shades of thought, and multiplies epithets with no other apparent view, than merely to round his periods.

On the whole, this pamphlet, as the production of a Statesman, will do no credit to Mr. Adams.

It is called a letter “ on the present state of our national affairs, with remarks,” &c.

The first eight pages are occupied with his objections to the propriety of writing at all to the Legislature, and the motives which impelled him to the same task. The remaining twenty-three are filled with remarks on Mr. Pickering's letter. In reading the letter of Mr. Adams, we very soon lose sight of the “ present state of our national affairs,” and find ourselves in company with a gentleman who hardly suppresses his ill-humour sufficiently to make the customary professions of candour and respect for his colleague. It is impossible not to perceive that he writes with the keen feelings of an adversary, eager in the pursuit, and little scrupulous about the means, he uses to discredit his opponent. We therefore

\* Topical application! that's very well—I owe you one.

find that "the present state of our national affairs" has degenerated, in Mr. Adams's hands, into the puny controversies of personal altercation.

We have now done with the *Learned Professor*, and come to the *Honourable Senator*.

WE cannot refrain from suggesting to the Honourable Senator the impropriety of those harsh terms which he has applied to a foreign nation. It is of some importance to the character of our country, and perhaps to her interest, that those who are charged with the conduct of our affairs (in relation to other powers) should not violate established principles of decorum. Men who have a proper sense of personal dignity will avoid indecency for their own sakes. Other men ought to avoid it from a sense of duty. We entreat the Honourable Senator to reflect on what he feels at the perusal of any thing which has been said or written injurious to the interest or character of his own country. If he should be taken for the mouth-piece of his friends (whom we heartily congratulate on their acquisition) may it not be concluded that the rulers of America are hostile to England? He has cited what happened at Copenhagen. The reason assigned by the British Ministers, for bombarding that city, was a conviction that Denmark would soon be numbered among their foes, which made it their duty to deprive her of the means of annoyance. If a similar conviction should be produced respecting America, and a similar result should follow, it would be but a poor consolation to the victims of hostility, that it had been provoked by the style of the Honourable John Q. Adams. A publication of that sort, without a name, would be a thing of little consequence, because it is easy for the servants of a great monarch to despise anonymous slander: but we should be sorry that contempt were extended to Senators of the United States. And yet, we put it to the Honourable Senator, if (changing the circumstances) he would not feel himself in a dilemma between contempt and indignation? Let him then consider that British Ministers have also the feelings of men. He would not be the object of their contempt. Does he desire that their power should be exercised against his country? If not, why did he, *pending a negotiation*, (a time which he deems so critical) heap up every brand of wrath, to make hot the fire of resentment? We premise that the Honourable Senator appears, from his own shewing, to be deep in the confidence of our Administration. He tells us that *few* of the facts he shall relate rest on information peculiar



to himself; and again he tells us, "The French Emperor had *not* declared that he would have no neutrals. He had *not* required that our ports should be shut against British Commerce." Thus the Honourable Senator has pledged himself stoutly to two negations. Did he do this rashly and unadvisedly? If he did, the pledge is not worth a rush. Did he receive information from the President, or Secretary of State? If not received from (or through) the foreign department, the information is futile. If so received, two conclusions result: first, his confidence in the government, by pledging his character on their assurance; secondly, their confidence in him, shewn by the communication of what was withheld from others; not merely from Federalists, but from old and approved Democrats, who spoke and voted against the measures proposed, on the ground of those French declarations which Mr. Adams denies. From these two conclusions it results further, that the opinions he has promulgated, and the feelings he has expressed, are in very truth the opinions and feelings of the American Cabinet. But that his doctrines, as well as his sentiments, are adverse to England, and favourable to France, no man can doubt who reads his publication. Hence England may fairly infer that the American councils are hostile to her, and partial to her enemy. We submit to the Honourable Senator's consideration, however, one little circumstance: Is he sure that in this business he has not been duped? If it should turn out that the French Emperor has made *substantially* the declarations so positively denied, will he say that his new friends took advantage of his eagerness to bask in the sunshine of their smiles, and gave him assurances, which, like the language of Macbeth's Witches, though true to the ear, were false to the sense? Will he acknowledge that, besotted by his own vanity, he committed himself fully on a half confidence? This would give him a life-rent of ridicule. Will he, to avoid the imputation of being gulled, declare that, knowing the truth, he contradicted the words only and not the substance, of threats ascribed to France? If he does, he puts a brand to his forehead which no balm of pity can efface. Thus, then, he stands between the world and Jefferson. The candour of the former is proverbial: the truth and honour of the latter we shall say nothing about; but we desire it may be remembered that the Honourable John Q. Adams (a Senator from the State of Massachusetts) has made the declaration above cited. And now we proceed to consider his arguments.

The first in order, as well as in place, is the respect due by the people to the decisions made, *after due deliberation*,

by their representatives in Congress. The Embargo, he tells us " was *discussed in the Senate of the United States*, and, " as far as the constitutional authority of that body extended, " there it was decided." But we are informed, on authority which cannot be disputed, that the bill laying an embargo was read a first, a second, and a third time, and passed in the Senate in four hours ; and that a little time was repeatedly requested, to consider and obtain information, but it was denied. We ask, then, what Mr. Adams meant by telling his fellow citizens the Embargo was *discussed* in the Senate, and is entitled to their respect and obedience, because it had obtained a *like* concurrence of the other branch, and the approbation of the President ? Let any man, acquainted with the forms of publick business, estimate the time required for the several readings of the bill, the votes taken on each reading, and that necessarily consumed in asking repeatedly for a little delay, and then see how much will be left for discussion. The President recommends a measure (which we believe to be unconstitutional) fraught with danger, and injurious to a great proportion of the people. The Senate hurry it through all the forms established to prevent the evils of precipitate resolutions, in the short space of four hours ; the House of Representatives concur, in the same rash and rapid manner ; after which the President (his edict being thus enregistered) gives to his obsequious servants the nod of approbation. And this semblance, this shadow of a law ; this unconstitutional decree ; this contraband ware of legislation, smuggled through the publick offices without opening the package of a single sentence, without examining a thread in the texture ; this foreign, prohibited commodity, so produced, so introduced, and so displayed, is recommended to freemen as commanding their respect. How dare you, Mr. Adams, declare, in the very teeth of truth, that the bill was discussed in the Senate ? Under what pretext will you attempt to defend your veracity ? We speak not of candour : it is an article so entirely useless to your new friends, that it might have been prudent to get rid of it, if any had fallen to your lot : but, sir, how will you reconcile your assertion with the fact ? Will you pretend that the plump vote of a majority, marshalled and disciplined to the motions of their fogleman, is a discussion ? When the dearest interests of a country are strangled by the mutes of a Grand Signior, how dare you call the murderous deed a *discussion* ?

The Honourable Senator tells us much of the open-heartedness he has always preserved, the charity with which he has

interpreted the conduct of others, his frank and unsuspecting confidence. We are thankful for the information; which was by no means unnecessary. The world (unjustly no doubt) had characterized him as jealous, suspicious, irritable; one of those "who are never at heart's ease when they behold a greater than themselves." But he must know best what passes in his own bosom, and therefore we shall not listen to the slanders of an envious world. Let him, however, be careful that he do not invalidate his declarations, and furnish evidence against himself.

The Honourable Senator has exhausted his powers to shew the importance of three points which his colleague had stated, as the only ground of the Embargo; and yet, speaking of the orders of the British Council of November last, he says:

"To my mind, in comparison with those orders, the three causes to which Mr. Pickering limits our grounds for a rupture with England might indeed be justly denominated pretences. In comparison with them, former aggressions sink into insignificance. To argue upon the subjects of our disputes with Britain, or upon the motives for the Embargo, and keep them out of sight, is laying your finger upon the units before a series of noughts, and then arithmetically proving that they all amount to nothing."

Thus he not only gives direct assurance, but calls in the aid of a violent metaphor to shew, that in his opinion, every other cause of quarrel with England was insignificant, was nothing, in comparison with those orders.

When therefore the Honourable Senator takes up the question of impressment, and scolds and moans and groans through nine long paragraphs and four short ones, it is fair to reply, Very fairly spoken, to be sure, but you yourself consider the thing as insignificant. And when again, through ten paragraphs more, he plays the termagant with the British for their rule of 1756; one of their adherents might reply, Lord, Sir! Why all this talk about nothing? And when again, through ten other paragraphs, he amuses himself and his friends by stirring up the embers of strife to the tune of Admiral Berkeley, some wag might hint that it is beneath Senatorial dignity to act a part in the comedy of *Much ado about nothing*.

In plain and sober truth, if these points were so trivial, why so much labour to shew their importance? If important, why declare them to be insignificant; mere cyphers? As times go, it might be austere to ask for consistency of con-



duct ; but really, Mr. Senator, it is not unreasonable to ask for consistency of language, at least for the space of one letter. We presume not to expect that a second letter shall consist with the first. As to aberrations of that sort, we accept beforehand the honest apology of *Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*. To which we are always disposed, very civilly, to reply—And much good may it do you. But indeed and indeed sir, being yankees, and having at heart the honour of New-England, we wish you had stuck to your text in what you composed and delivered for one day's edification. You will pardon us however, if in deference to your declaration, just cited, we should take too slight a notice of these aggressions, which *sink into insignificance*. We shall not overlook what you say of them, lest you should suppose we are wanting in respect.

First, then, on the claim of Britain to take her seamen from our merchant ships, you say that her prescriptive right cannot apply to us (who are but lately become an independent nation) if this right existed only against us while colonies ; for that in such case,

“ As a *relict* of colonial servitude, it is not entitled to our “ submission.”

You have too much understanding to believe it was your colleague's intention, that America should submit to a claim, involving the acknowledgment of her dependence, as a colony, on Great Britain. Yes, sir, you have too much understanding. You know better. If we take no further notice of what you say, it is because we do not wish, by contrasting your convictions with your insinuations, to place you in a position alike awkward and uneasy. But you say further,

“ If it be meant that the right has been claimed and exercised for ages, over the merchant vessels of other nations, “ I apprehend it is a mistake. The case never occurred “ with sufficient frequency to constitute a practice, much less “ a right. If it had been either, it would have been noticed “ by some of the writers on the law of nations. The truth “ is, the question arose out of American independence, from “ the severance of one nation into two. It never was made “ a question between any other two nations. There is there- “ fore no right of prescription.”

To this we reply, that the silence of writers on public law (admitting that they were silent) would only prove that the practice was, as in fact it was, a consequence of the clear acknowledged principle, that every nation has a right to the military service of her own people. You, sir, well know,

that the pretended right of expatriation is of novel date, and of no authority. If the case you mention did not frequently occur, it was because the seamen of belligerent powers were seldom in the employ of other states. You know (and if not you may easily learn) that it has been the ancient practice of England, when a war broke out, to call for the return of all seamen and seafaring people, by a Proclamation. And you know (or may easily learn) that France, like England, has insisted on this very right, and maintained it by her practice; and that she has (during this very war) taken her seamen from our ships. You know that a contract between two parties cannot impair the validity of a prior contract by either, with a third person, nor absolve them from their duties. And when you speak of seamen on board of our merchant vessels as being *within our jurisdiction* upon the high seas, you know that you advance a position which, if maintained to the extent, must involve every neutral nation in war. If enemies' goods are taken within the jurisdiction of a neutral power, it is an act of hostility. If a neutral merchantship (on the high sea) is within the neutral jurisdiction, so as to render impressment unlawful, she is equally within the same jurisdiction to every other purpose; consequently all the cases of capture of enemies' goods on board a neutral ship, the legality of which has been admitted from the earliest times, must (according to your doctrine) be hostile aggressions. We will not follow you through the turnings and doubling of which the subject is susceptible. We all now know, and from the relation in which you stood to the executive department, you could not have been ignorant (unless indeed they fooled you with half confidence) that Great-Britain offered so to restrain the practice of impressment as to remedy the grievances of which we complain, and that Messrs. Munroe and Pinckney signed a treaty in the firm and honest belief, that having obtained such a promise, they had substantially provided for that object of their instructions.— They supposed it was the wish of the American government to protect American sailors, and never suspected a design to embroil the two countries (against their will) by exacting from the British ministers a formal abandonment of what their nation, and every other nation, has hitherto considered as an unquestionable right. A thing which no British Minister dare to do; and which we, as a Maritime Power, ought not to ask. Our negociators were, it seems, mistaken, and the Honourable Mr. John Q. Adams now tells us, (speaking no doubt the language of his Excellency Thomas Jefferson)



“ I would subscribe to any compromise of this contest *consistent with the rights of sovereignty, the duties of humanity, and principles of reciprocity*: but to the right of forcing even her own subjects out of our merchant vessels on the high seas, I can never consent.”

That is to say, I will settle the matter any way you please, provided it be in the single way I please. This is the plain meaning, when stripped of sounding words which amount to nothing. The article (be it what it may) if reciprocal, must consist with the principles of reciprocity and the rights of sovereignty; because it must acknowledge the same rights in each sovereign. As for the duties of humanity, they are the usual stuffing of a jacobin sausage, in which there is so much seasoning that poor humanity gets sadly peppered. If the duties of humanity are to be invoked, let them be exerted in making such honest provisions as may prevent abuse and consequent suffering.

In respect to the British principle of 1756, so called, we hold it to be unfounded; and the less worthy of attention, as in practice it has long been relinquished, except a small remnant, to which our administration seem willing to submit. We shall take no special notice of those “holiday and lady terms” in which the Honourable Senator likens the conduct of Great Britain to the crimes of poisoning and assassination; or rather declares it to be a greater crime than either. We insist on neutral right to the full extent, but we claim no right to do wrong. We claim no right to assist one enemy against the other. If our fellow citizens, by giving such assistance, take a part in the war, and in consequence thereof lose their effects, we cannot think them entitled to call on the nation for redress. Besides, the principle of 1756 was not (as the Honourable Senator seems to suppose) justified by Great Britain, solely on the ground that neutrals engaged in trade between France and her colonies were to be considered as being in that respect naturalized by France. Although it was maintained as a principle that neutrals could not trade in time of war beyond what they had been accustomed to in time of peace, yet it was declared on the part of the British King in answer to the remonstrance of Holland, whose ships had been confiscated for carrying on a commerce to which they were in fact entitled by treaty between her and England, that *it was necessary to his Majesty's success in the war*; and therefore (being an act of necessity) was justified by the law of self-preservation; a law paramount to the stipulation of treaties. It is not for us to split hairs respecting

such awful conclusions. On the one hand, it cannot be denied that self-preservation is the first law of nature ; and, on the other, it must be admitted that, as any thing may be justified on the plea of necessity, so that plea ought not lightly to be made or admitted.

But the Honourable Senator has deduced, as a natural consequence from the principle which we all condemn, the decree which Napoleon made at Berlin ; and the still severer decree which he made at Milan. He tells us, indeed, he is not the apologist of France ; and he did right in saying so, because otherwise we could have viewed him in no other light ; but we are willing to believe him on his word : and the rather as he tells us that “ if the voice of reason and justice could be heard by France, they would tell her she has done wrong.” If she has done wrong, if her conduct is condemned by reason and justice, it cannot be considered as a fair and natural consequence from the conduct of Britain.

At the time when Napoleon issued the Berlin decree, by which he declared the British dominions in a state of blockade, and, by necessary inference, that all vessels trading to or from them, should be lawful prize, we were in the practice of trading freely to the French Islands, and of trading as freely to France. The only impediment laid in our way, by England, was, that we should not go directly from those Islands to Europe. This direct trade between the mother country and her colonies, inhibited during peace by the general policy of Europe, and only permitted in war to cover the property from pursuit of a foe, and to man (with the seamen previously employed to transport it) the national fleets ; this direct trade England considered as the trade of her enemy. A question arose, whether, by touching in our way at an American port, the nature of a voyage between the colonies and the mother country was materially changed, and of one, became two distinct voyages ; or whether it must be considered as one continued, unbroken voyage, only lengthened by a few leagues. On this subject a piddling, mercantile spirit seems to have shewn itself in the British Court of Appeals, and to have mingled itself in the decision of a national question : a sentence was pronounced, which, to say the least, was inconsiderate : a sentence which, however, did not materially affect our trade, but which affected our independence : a sentence nevertheless, which it would seem has not offended our rulers ; seeing that they have not seriously objected to an article in the treaty by which the principle of it was acknowledged. Thus, then, while we enjoyed a



trade with all the world, unlimited but by a circumstance of slight restriction; a trade which gave to France greater advantages than she ever before derived from neutral navigation; at that moment, she issued the decree of Berlin, and interdicted, under pain of confiscation, the larger half of our commerce. She interdicted that part which alone is essential to the *People*. It is notorious that the greater part of our traffick with the East and West Indies, and of the consequent traffick with Europe, tends to enrich our *Merchants*, but is in no other respect of importance. But the trade with England provides a market for our most valuable productions, and affords a supply of what we most want. A greater violation of our rights, therefore, could not have been made. And had the power been equal to the will, it would have occasioned a greater plunder of our property than ever was experienced. This act of lawless power, giddy with success, and drunk with prosperity, being announced in England at the moment our Commissioners there had concluded a treaty, the British monarch declared, in a spirit of honourable candour and integrity, that if it should be executed, and we should tamely submit, (neither of which things was supposed to be possible) he reserved to himself the right of retaliation.

After the lapse of many months, and no marks of opposition on our part, he has exercised that right. The measure of retaliation will be presently considered. And will any man pretend to justify, or even to excuse, the French Emperor's Berlin decree, on the grounds on which it was avowedly made?

It shall not be denied that he might treat us as we suffered ourselves to be treated by his enemy. If the act of the one was founded in right, so of course must be that of the other. If wrong, our submission to the wrong was taking part so far with his enemy, as to give him the right of exacting from us an equal submission. But to contend that we, by not sacrificing all our ships, our seamen, and our goods, to vindicate a claim to the carrying trade between enemy colonies and the mother country, (a claim never yet acknowledged by the great commercial powers) thereby gave the French Emperor a right to violate the established principles of the law of nations, and deprive us not only of commercial privileges, but of our sovereignty and independence, in an assertion so pregnant with absurdity, so shocking to the common sense of mankind, that it would be an insult to our readers if we should say one syllable in refutation. And yet this is what the Honourable Senator insists on, if not in the plainest



and most direct terms, by the most necessary and unavoidable inference. We leave it with him and his friends. They will need all their eloquence and all their art to answer at the bar of a people impoverished, roused, insulted; of a people who must be driven almost to madness, when they shall discover the vast sacrifice which has been made of their property, their honour, and their independence.

The Honourable Senator introduces his remarks on the affair of the Chesapeake, by reiterating the declaration that he is not suspicious, and says, he would believe the British ministers when they profess a desire to make reparation, if their professions were not contradicted by facts. Here we have a charge of insincerity and falsehood, made by an honourable gentleman, who proclaims, in the same breath, his frankness and candour. He appeals to facts. Has he then told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? This, as a man of honour, he was bound to do.

He states as facts, 1st, that Mr. Rose was not informed of the Orders of Council of November. 2dly, That reparation was not made in England only because our President had coupled with his demand of satisfaction on that subject a similar demand on other subjects. 3dly, That reparation was only offered in general terms, but without any specific proposals. 4thly, That Mr. Rose, upon his arrival, coupled with the question of reparation a question foreign to it, viz. the president's proclamation. 6thly, That they did not give up their opinion till the British government disavowed the act. 7thly, That admiral Berkeley approved of that opinion. 9thly, That it was said Mr. Canning supported the same opinion in council, but was overruled. 10thly, That Berkeley was applauded in the ministerial newspapers. 11thly, That many in England call loudly for war with America. 12thly, That a nobleman declared in the House of Lords, that the right of searching ships of war should be maintained against America, but disclaimed as to other nations. 13thly, That Admiral Berkeley, by a court martial, of his own subordinate officers, hung one of the men taken from the Chesapeake. 14thly, That the Admiral called this man Jenkin Ratford, though he was taken from the Chesapeake by the name of Wilson. 15thly, That although it has been said this man was proved to be Ratford, and confessed himself to be Ratford, yet it has also been said that Ratford is now living in Pennsylvania. 16thly, That after the disavowal made of the Admiral's conduct by his own government, no confidence can be due to a court martial held to sanction his proceed-

ings. 17thly, That although the three other men were taken from the Chesapeake by the sole authority of the British searching Lieutenant, there was not the shadow of a pretence that they were British subjects, yet they were sentenced to suffer death. 18thly, That Admiral Berkeley, when he left Halifax, received a complimentary address from the colonial assembly; and told them, in his answer, that he had no official information of his recall. 19thly, That afterwards, on leaving Bermuda, he was highly complimented by that colonial assembly, with a manifest reference to the affair of the Chesapeake.

Having stated and commented on these *his* facts, the Honourable Senator concludes thus:

“ Under all these circumstances, *without applying any of the maxims of a suspicious policy to the British professions*, I may still be permitted to *believe* that their ministry never seriously intended to make us honourable reparation at all.”

How very fearful is the Honourable Senator that he should be deemed suspicious! How very anxious to defend himself against the charge, when no such charge is made! Ah! Mr. Senator, this same thing called conscience is very troublesome. It will stare folks in the face; ay, and put them out of countenance too. But did ever any man see *such* facts stated to support *such* an inference? Here are nineteen allegations, of which the last fifteen, if true, are either foreign to the question, or tend to establish the reverse of what they were adduced to prove. Let us cast an eye at them.

The fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth allegations of the Honourable Senator shew that some of our own citizens, and many British subjects, considered the conduct of Berkeley as justified by the previous provocation; and that, wonderful to tell! Berkeley was such an odd fellow as to approve of opinions favourable to his own conduct: *Therefore*, says this Honourable Man, the British Cabinet was insincere. His ninth allegation is, that Mr. Canning held the same heterodox opinion, but was overruled by the other Ministers: And *therefore*, says this Honourable Man, the Cabinet which overruled him was insincere. His tenth and eleventh allegations are, that ministerial prints advanced the same abominable opinion, and many British subjects called for war with America: *Therefore*, says this Honourable Man, the Administration, which, resisting the clamour and the call for war, held out the olive branch of reparation to preserve peace, was insincere. Thus when Washington, the great and the good, stemming



the torrent of popular delusion, proclaimed the neutrality of America, and maintained it in spite of a jacobin faction; when the honest man who succeeded him, walking in the same honourable path, exposed himself to every shaft of malice which the same faction could shoot; these patriots, these true Americans, were called insincere.

But the ministerial prints defended Berkeley. And is this the unerring standard by which to decide? Will our rulers consent to be judged by the same standard? Look at the prints which support them; see the constant, the earnest efforts to plunge America into a war with England. Then see their constant, their earnest protestations of amity, of neutrality, of the love of justice, and of peace. Does this Honourable Man, now that he is let into the secret, judging the conduct of others by that of his friends, impute to the councils of England that duplicity which marks our own!

His 12th allegation is, that a member of the British Senate (a friend to the administration) proposed to maintain, respecting us, a claim which should be abandoned as to other nations: And *therefore* this Honourable Man concludes the administration which frankly disavowed that claim respecting us, to have been insincere. The disavowal was first made specially to the diplomatick representative of our nation; then publickly by proclamation to all the civilized societies of man. But a lord it seems has disapproved of that disavowal so far as it regards us: Such at least is the Honourable Senator's interpretation of a speech in which others can find no such idea. But had it been expressed distinctly, will the solitary sentiment of an individual in opposition to a publick official act of the greatest notoriety, prove the falsity of that act? A man promises to pay a debt, and as evidence of the promise gives a bond, after which one of his friends declares, that in his opinion nothing was due, that his friend had been cheated, and ought not to have given the bond. On the ground of this declaration, a gentleman (boasting of his candour) insists that the obligor never meant to pay.

His 13th 14th and 15th allegations are, that Admiral Berkeley, by the agency of a court martial of *his own subordinate officers*, hung a man by the name of Ratford, who had been taken by the name of Wilson, and that, notwithstanding the pretended proof and confession of the man himself, that his name was Ratford, *it is said* that Ratford is now living in Pennsylvania: *Therefore*, says this Honourable Man, the British government, which disavowed the conduct of Berkeley, was insincere. We forbear to notice the hei-



nous charge against an admiral for appointing a court martial of officers under his command; because, in justice to the Honourable Senator, we must acknowledge it is a practice which never existed until after the existence of armies and fleets, and *therefore*, according to his logick respecting the rule of '56, "there is no right of prescription," and it cannot apply to us. As little shall we notice the charge of perjury and murder made against the court martial, if not in direct terms, by the strongest implication. It was, we presume, inserted as an irrefragable proof of the gentleman's unsuspecting candour, and of that open-heartedness which imputes no base motive. His 16th allegation is, that,

"After the character which the disavowal of Admiral Berkeley's own government has given to his conduct, no confidence can be claimed by or due to the proceedings of a court martial of his associates held to sanction his proceedings."

And, *therefore*, says this Honourable Man, that government which made the disavowal was insincere. Such reasoning as this might become a pettifogger in a county court. There the stupid might wonder, and the base applaud. But from an American Senator! Oh, poor America, how art thou fallen!—To prove the insincerity of a master in disavowing the act of his servant, and promising reparation, another act of that servant is quoted: But this last act being on the face of it regular and legal, to impeach its validity, for the purpose of attaching the charge of insincerity to the master himself, his very disavowal of the first act is quoted as proof that the servant is not to be relied on.

Let it, for argument sake, be admitted that the disavowal of the British government attached such infamy to the character of Admiral Berkeley, that every subsequent part of his conduct must of necessity have been infamous, will it follow that the disavowal was insincere—a mere show—a pretext—a thing of no substance and of no effect? If so, what becomes of the objection that the appointment and proceedings of the court martial were vitiated by the disavowal; a disavowal amounting to nothing? But if the disavowal had the effects deduced from it, how can it be such a sham—such a pretext—such a nullity? The argument is equally wonderful in every part. It stands thus; If England was sincere in her disavowal of Berkeley, no confidence can be due to the decisions of a court afterwards appointed by him: if no such confidence be due, the man called Ratford was unjustly condemned and executed; and if the man called Ratford was

unjustly condemned and executed, England was not sincere in her disavowal : *Therefore*, if England was sincere, she was insincere. Not a single member of this argument but what is as fallacious as the conclusion is contradictory. To disavow the conduct of a military man, on some special occasion or specifick act, neither proves nor implies that he is void of honesty, honour or truth ; as little ground is there to insinuate that officers commanded by a bad man must of necessity be villains ; the willing instruments to commit, at his bidding, crimes the most infamous and abominable. It is not proved, and it cannot be presumed, that officers, whose well-earned fame is the theme of general and just applause ; officers, whose manly spirit is acknowledged by their foes ; that such officers would commit in cold blood a judicial murder ; that they would stain their honour in this world, and hazard their salvation in the next, merely to furnish an excuse for the misconduct of their superiour. In a word, it does not follow, even though the sentence of that court martial should be unjust, and the confession of his own guilt by the man executed should be false, that the British government was insincere. Nay, it does not appear on any other ground than suspicion, a ground the gentleman so repeatedly disclaims, that the British Government knew any thing about the court martial.

His seventeenth allegation is, that three other men, taken from the Chesapeake, though there was not the shadow of a pretence that they were British subjects, were sentenced to suffer death. And *therefore*, says this Honourable man, the British Cabinet was insincere. Unfortunately for his honour, this allegation, which would not, if true, support the inference drawn from it, happens to be false. He complains of a clamour for war with America, which he finds in English newspapers, and he complains of a speech (which he thinks injurious to America) said to have been made in the house of lords ; for which he has no better authority than an English newspaper. What then will he answer when it shall be retorted, not on the evidence of a newspaper, but under the sanction of his own signature, that a member of the American Senate, enjoying the confidence and writing under the eye of the American administration, has, with a view to exasperate his fellow citizens and drive them into a ruinous war with England, asserted publicly a falsehood ?

Again, this honourable man, in this very letter, containing this direct unqualified assertion of a fact which never happened, undertakes to declare that the French Emperor has *not* done certain things. But how can he expect credit for his

negative assurances; when so careless of his credit as to positive facts? His 18th and 19th allegations are, that Berkeley was complimented by the address of two colonial assemblies, and told one of them (so late as December) that he had no official notice of his recall: *Therefore*, says this honourable man, the British Cabinet was insincere. And so, if by a speedy recall they had put it out of their power to make that step a part of the satisfaction to our government, it might equally have been concluded, that they were insincere; and with equal propriety. He cannot, it seems, for the very soul of him, help believing that every thing is done, in every part of the world, exactly after the fashion of our federal city. There he sees legislative bodies who go neither forward nor backward, neither to the right hand nor to the left, until they receive the President's orders. With that mode of procedure he is practically conversant, and therefore supposes that colonial assemblies, in Halifax and Bermuda, wait for royal orders before they express an opinion. He is mistaken. The representatives of British subjects are too proud to imitate our example. They are in the habit of thinking and acting for themselves. Poor creatures! they have not yet learnt, in the new school of liberty, to surrender into another man's custody their understanding, their confidence, and their will. But if they had, can it be imagined that British ministers (engaged in the deep game of duplicity) would be so silly as to shew their cards to a host of colonial representatives? Yet all this accumulation of supposition on supposition, and suspicion on suspicion, is laboriously heaped up by the candid, open-hearted, sincere Mr. John Q. Adams, to prove the British ministers were insincere when they made a prompt, spontaneous offer of reparation for the misconduct of Admiral Berkeley.

Let us now examine the few allegations of the Honourable Senator's which have a bearing on the subject. They amount to this; that reparation was not made in England; that though offered generally, no specifick terms were proposed; that the special minister sent out was not informed of certain orders relating to another subject; and that he coupled foreign matter with the question of reparation. We have already seen how near the Honourable Senator has kept to the truth so far as he went; we shall now see whether he has told the whole truth.

The attack on the Chesapeake was made on the 3d of June. The President's Proclamation, consequent upon it, was dated the second of July. Intelligence of the insult reached London and was communicated by the British Secretary of State to



the American Minister on the twenty-fifth; in which communication Mr. Canning expresses sentiments of the *deepest regret*, and adds the assurance that, if the British officers shall prove to be culpable, the *most prompt and effectual reparation* shall be afforded to the Government of the United States. On the 29th of July, Mr. Monroe, premising that he had no instruction from his Government, complains of the outrage in a tone of anger and resentment. He mentions some aggravating circumstances, and says he might state other examples of indignity, *if it were not improper to mingle them with that more serious cause of complaint*. He concludes by demanding an immediate and frank *disavowal of the principle* on which the attack was made, together with the assurance that the officer shall *suffer merited punishment*. This letter, though rather hasty and harsh, considering Mr. Monroe's diplomatic character, was excusable in a soldier. It was consistently with the feelings of a soldier and a gentleman, that he declared his opinion of the impropriety of blending *this affair of honour* with any other consideration. On the 3d of August, five days after the date of Mr. Monroe's letter, Mr. Canning replied, by observing that, as the affair was confessedly brought forward without instructions, *or a knowledge of facts*, it might be sufficient to repeat the general assurances of a disposition to make reparation: that as this had been already given, he had reason to be surprised at the tone of Mr. Monroe's representation; notwithstanding which, the king's desire to shew his justice and moderation would not permit him to hesitate in giving the assurance that he *neither did, nor had at any time, maintained the pretension of a right to search ships of war in the national service of any state for deserters*; wherefore, if the statement made by Mr. Monroe should prove to be accurate, *his majesty had no difficulty in disavowing the act, and would have no difficulty in manifesting his displeasure at the conduct of his officers*. Finally, he agreed with Mr. Monroe in opinion, as to the *impropriety of involving other matter in a question of sufficient importance to claim a serious consideration*. Thus then, in the space of forty days from the time when the attack was made on our coast, it was disavowed in London: The principle was disclaimed, and reparation promised. All that remained was to establish the facts.

Thus stood the affair when the President's Proclamation arrived. In Mr. Canning's note of the 8th of August, the Proclamation is mentioned to Mr. Monroe as just received in a newspaper, which he sends to Mr. Monroe, and asks if the

proclamation be authentick. Mr. Monroe replies, on the 29th, that he is yet without instructions, but that he shall, he expects, when he receives them, be able to furnish a full and just view of all circumstances. On the 30th of August Mr. Monroe received his instructions, in a letter from Mr. Madison of the 6th of July, inclosing, among other things, the President's Proclamation. And now he was apprised that he had taken a wrong measure of those whom he served. They did not feel, as he did, that honour suffers no exteriour circumstances to be mingled with an affront : that matters of business or advantage, questions of profit or loss, cannot enter into the consideration of a gentleman where his honour is at stake. He was, no doubt, surprised to discover that in advancing the sentiments of a soldier he had committed himself as a minister. But he was distinctly instructed that " an entire abolition of impressments from vessels under the flag of the United States must make an indispensable part of the satisfaction."

Here then we find a question of publick law, which had been agitated eighteen years, tied fast to the question of satisfaction for a recent insult. Mr. Monroe is enjoined not to accept of any reparation, unless Great-Britain shall surrender what she considers as her unquestionable right.

Seeing that with some it may be matter of astonishment that the extreme impropriety of this conduct did not suggest itself to the members of our administration, it may be well to give a little insight into their notions, their temper, their genius, and their conduct.

In the first place, then, they set a high value on the thra-sonick art, commonly called bullying ; for they conclude, with characteristick sagacity, that since, when France threatens they obey ; when they threaten, England will obey. Thus the scheme of their policy consists in obeying France and bullying England. So much for their notions. Their temper is to be *fortiter in modo, et suaviter in re* ; to speak big words, and do little things. By big words they please the bawlers, a numerous race ; and by little things they tickle little minds ; gaining credit with those who very justly consider littleness as a proof of cunning, and very unjustly imagine cunning to be a mark of wisdom. Their genius is of sufficient force to devise a daily excuse for the daily blunder ; but as it cannot comprehend, so it does not consider, the national interest. They are, in regard to that, what may be called microcosmick statesmen : people who scrutinize a part, without seeing the whole. They have an excellent knack of discovering

what suits the interests of their party ; what offices must be given ; what appearances must be assumed ; and what opinions must be insinuated : considering their country as it is of value to their party, and their party, as it is of value to themselves. Their conduct is bottomed on the necessity of popularity to the execution of their projects. The question with them is, not whether a measure will serve or injure ; but whether it will offend or please the people. In short, they seem to have adopted as a normal maxim, *nullum numen abest si sit popularitas*. With popular support every thing is practicable. Thus, in the fond conceit that England might be bullied into submission, the great point of their policy was to screw up America to a proper pitch of wrath. The affair of the Chesapeake seemed a lucky incident for the purpose, and was seized on greedily. The people, fully informed of one half the facts, and kept in ignorance of the other, was enraged almost to phrenzy ; wherefore they supposed the moment was arrived for frightening England, by the threat of invading Canada, and of joining a world in arms, to crush *the world's last hope*. This was the propitious moment ; while she was fighting to defend her existence and our own ; this was the moment to seize her by the throat, and compel her to surrender one of her dearest rights. How generous ! how magnanimous ! how wise ! Presuming that, in her critical condition, she could easily be bullied into submission, they anticipated the glory of that bloodless triumph, and the congratulation of their friends on the success of their vigorous measures.

But in devising this notable scheme, they never reflected on the chance of meeting with men who prefer honour to life. They might have read or heard of such men, but probably they felt no disposition to believe in their existence. Mr. Monroe, proud in the spirit of his country, called, as a soldier, for reparation to her honour ! He insisted that other questions should rest till this point was settled ; and the British government, though offended at the manner, did justice to the motive, and joined in the issue. But now Mr. Monroe finds himself obliged to ask and insist on a different matter, which the British ministers peremptorily refuse. Mr. Monroe's letter, and Mr. Canning's answer, both well written, are before the publick. We will not, therefore, repeat their contents. We believe the most prejudiced reader will admit the reason of the case to be on Mr. Canning's side, and will see, that if reparation was not made in London, the cause of delay arose at Washington.



In the course of the negotiation, Mr. Monroe declared what were the specifick things expected by us as redress and reparation. The most important, *the disavowal of the right*, had been already made. As to any thing further, Mr. Canning observed, that the President's Proclamation, inhibiting our ports to his majesty's ships on account of an insult from an individual, which the President himself considered and stated as unauthorized, was an act of hostility done in the very moment when reparation was asked as a duty of friendship. Mr. Canning further observed, that although the circumstances which preceded the attack could not justify Admiral Berkeley in assuming to himself the right of war and peace, on a question between him and his sovereign, yet those circumstances must be allowed their due influence on the measure of reparation, as between the two nations. And it must be owned, that our President virtually acknowledged the truth of this observation, when he so strongly insisted, in the outset, that the men taken were citizens of the United States.

One thing asked by Mr. Monroe, as an act of reparation, was, that a special minister should be sent out to apologize. And as soon as it was ascertained that he was tied up by his instructions, not to treat on the subject of the Chesapeake singly and distinctly, Mr. Canning announced the intention of thus sending out a special minister for that express and single purpose. Here then the second point was conceded: so that only two questions remained: Shall the men taken be restored, and what punishment shall be inflicted on the Admiral?

As to the last, it is evident that the British government can do no more than recall or dismiss him, unless by the intervention of a court martial; and therefore it is to be presumed that this question may be easily settled. We will not anticipate the other.—What has been said is sufficient to shew the futility of the Honourable Senator's suspicion, in so far as it rested on a supposed defect on the side of England, in not proposing specifick terms. It was ours to propose the terms—we did propose them, and she acceded to the greater and more important part. But here it seems proper to state the conduct which sound policy, not to mention a sense of propriety, would have dictated to our administration. Unquestionably, they ought to have recalled their proclamation, as soon as they knew the King's disavowal of the violence, and of the right. They ought to have assigned that disavowal as their reason for the recall. They would thereby have gained the credit of establishing the right, and the

greater credit due to a just and impartial conduct. The act being disavowed, reparation for the wrong was a natural and necessary consequence. Whatever irregularities foreign officers may have committed, or may hereafter commit, the alternative must ever be, to seek redress by negotiation or by arms. After the resort to arms, we must negotiate, not for reparation, but for peace. A nation which respects itself cannot accede, under the application of threat or force, to terms which it would grant on the friendly demand of justice. The Proclamation was, beyond all doubt, a hostile act ; for the withholding from a belligerent a favour granted to his adversary, is taking side with one against the other : the party from whom the favour is withheld has a right to resent the partiality. The measure of his resentment, indeed, will depend on circumstances ; but having acquired the rights of war, he may well decline the duties of peace.

Admitting for a moment, with the Honourable Senator, that England was insincere in the offer of reparation ; was it wise to give her a just cause for refusal ? Was it wise to leave a plausible pretext ?

On the 16th of October, the king of England, by proclamation, in the common form of those used for calling home his seafaring subjects, made a formal abandonment of the claim to search foreign ships of war for British Seamen ; and as formal an assertion of his right to take them from merchant ships. Thus the bullying scheme ended, as such schemes generally do, in shame. Our administration, after taking their ground, that the right to impress seamen from merchant ships should be abandoned (as part of the reparation from Great Britain for the misconduct of Admiral Berkeley) no sooner saw their opponents take the adverse ground, than they made a prompt retreat, and agreed to negotiate on the single subject of the insult.

As Mr. Rose sailed before the 11th of November, there is no wonder that he came out ignorant of Orders issued on that day. But even had they been of antierior date, it was not likely that they should be referred to in his instructions ; because he was sent out to treat on a distinct subject, and because the English Minister, resident at Washington, was the proper channel through which to communicate the Orders ; and through which they were in fact communicated. So much for that ground of suspicion.

There remains one more ground, viz. that Mr. Rose would do nothing in the way of reparation, till the Proclamation was withdrawn. That the British Government had a per-

fect right to insist on the retraction of that Proclamation, we have no doubt : we have already assigned the principles of this right. But, on the whole, we incline to think that the British Ministers gave more importance to the Proclamation than it deserved. Had they sought cause of quarrel, they could have found enough and to spare, without that instrument. We think, therefore, they would better have consulted the king's dignity, by taking no notice of our hostile acts, and going on simply to make a suitable reparation for the wrong done by their officer : indeed, to have exceeded rather than fallen short of the measure. This conduct, towards a nation so defenceless as we are, would have exhibited a calm sense of dignity and justice, highly reputable to a great power. But, the reparation once made, England had a right to insist on reparation for the wrongs she had received. We venture to say that whenever this shall be done in the manner which the occasion requires, there will be an end to the quibbling and subtilty of Gallick attachment. The two nations will come to a fair and honest understanding, and the sense of common interest will be a bond of union between them to defend what is yet left of liberty in the world.

And now we come, at last, to that great cause of hostility against England, which the Honourable Senator considers of such vast magnitude as to merge, swallow up and annihilate every other : the orders of the British Council of November last. These justify, it seems, the Embargo and every thing else ; even war. Under those orders, he says, millions of American property are detained in British hands, or confiscated. This, Mr. Senator, is a mistake in point of fact : a mistake to which it seems you are somewhat liable. There has been no confiscation.

The Honourable Senator acknowledges that these orders were not communicated with the President's message recommending an Embargo. But what of that ? They had been *announced* in paragraphs from English newspapers, which *appeared* in the *National Intelligencer*, the very day the Embargo message was sent. Truly an excellent ground in legislative proceeding. The President recommends a measure of no trifling import ; a measure which destroys half the annual revenue of the country, and to support it he transmits certain documents which the Honourable Senator acknowledges to be insufficient. He tells us expressly that the great, the important information was derived from the *National Intelligencer*—from a newspaper ! The Honourable Senator then had no better ground for hurrying through the Senate, in four hours, a bill big with the most alarming consequences,



he had no other ground for an act of the most questionable policy, than a ministerial newspaper. Nay, he takes care to tell his constituents, lest perchance they might doubt the extent of his credulity, that the information he derived from this newspaper was not only without official authority; but that it was in contradiction to what had before been received. "Assurances (he says) had been given that there was reason to believe no such orders were contemplated."—"Suspicion was lulled by declarations equivalent nearly to a positive denial." And yet, under these circumstances, the Sage and Honourable Senator not only considered Smith (the President's printer) a sufficient authority for his own vote, but was surprised that his colleague should not be of the same opinion. What a fine pass is our country come to! Our senators legislate not only on the dictation of the President, but even on that of his printer. Let us hear him further:

"But although so feebly authenticated, and in some sort denied, yet the probability of the circumstances under which they were announced, and the sweeping tendency of their effects, formed to my understanding a *powerful* motive, and (together with the papers sent by the President, and *his express recommendation*) a *decisive* one for assenting to the Embargo."

It follows, therefore, that when any measure of a foreign nation which may affect our interest shall be announced in the National Intelligencer, under probable circumstances, the Senate of the United States ought to act with a promptitude, which, overleaping all rules, shall not permit one half-day's deliberation. He who hesitates must be condemned: he must be condemned too, if he does not acknowledge this newspaper authority to be authentick—nay, he may be charged with duplicity; with a design to deceive his constituents; betray their rights, and subject them to the sway of a foreign power, if he should omit to announce facts resting on such authority, among the reasons which operated, not on his own mind, but on the minds of those, who refusing to assign their motives, confine themselves to a plump voting in a course of dumb legislation.

But it may perhaps be supposed that if Congress had waited for official information, some great evil would have happened. Directly the reverse: it would have appeared that these tremendous orders, with all their sweeping tendency, were not to affect ships which should sail previous to a certain day. This British Council, with all the imputed tyranny, was too honest to imitate the example, in retaliating the violence

of France. England did not issue those *bursting orders*, which, tumbling about the Professor's ears, disturbed the Senator's judgment. She gave full time for information to all who might be affected. And we think ourselves correct in stating, that few (if any) vessels were prevented from sailing by the Embargo, whose owners would not have been apprised of the orders, or excepted from their effects. Let us add in this place another little circumstance, for the *Honourable* Senator's *candid* consideration.

“ These orders (says he) together with the subsequent retaliating decrees of France and Spain, have furnished the only reasons upon which I have acquiesced in its (the Embargo's) continuance to this day.” “ So far was it from being dictated by France, that it was *calculated to withdraw*, and has withdrawn from within her reach, all the means of compulsion which her subsequent decrees would have put in her possession.”

To our poor comprehension it stands demonstrated, that these *BRITISH ORDERS* had this same tendency to *withhold* from the grasp of France those means of compulsion. We do not say to *withdraw*, because we are not yet, like the learned Professor, so angry with England as to write *bad English*; and do not see how a thing is to be drawn out which is not already *in*. We take the liberty to repeat, that the British orders have prevented our property from going to France, whereas, we now know, the emperor would have sequestered it, to remain a pledge in his hands, for our obedience to his will; and in case we should not (*according to his orders*) declare war against his enemy, to be confiscated to his use. So that, without locking up the doors of our granaries, till our harvests should rot, by way of punishing merchants for operations which bring comfort to our citizens, and cash to the publick coffers, had things been left to their natural course, these detestable British orders would have protected our goods, not only from the spoil of French piracy, under the decree of Berlin (then in a train of execution to the extent of French power) but also from the gripe of French policy, which, violating the faith of treaties, and the principles of justice, would have used the property of our merchants as a lever to upheave and overthrow our peace and prosperity. All this would have appeared as it now appears, had the Congress patiently waited, and calmly considered, and wisely weighed information then in regular course of progress towards them; had they allowed time, a little time, for consideration.

Before we quit this chapter, we cannot help remarking on the spirit of prophecy with which the elect of our land seem so plenteously to be endowed. No threats had yet arrived from the great Napoleon. None had been made. At least, so says Mr. Adams. And yet the Embargo was *calculated* to defeat the object of his *subsequent* decrees.

But, says the *honourable* and *prudent* Senator, there was no danger in laying the Embargo ; it might be removed " if the alarm was groundless." And again he says, " it was a measure altogether of defence and of *experiment* ; a restriction always under our own controul." And he really seems surprised that his colleague could not agree to this experiment, always under controul : that he would not try projects with the national prosperity : that he would not indulge the president's humour by shutting up the avenues of national wealth : that he should be such a niggard of confidence, when, if the scheme should not answer, " a single day would suffice to unbar the doors." And thus this sage counsellor and faithful representative not only thinks it proper to act himself, but is astonished that his colleague should decline acting also, according to the president's will, on the authority of a newspaper ; and that too on so trifling a question as one which had for its object only the navigation, commerce and agriculture of the United States.

It is indeed strange that such a rash young man as Pickering would not try projects with these trifling concerns, when it was so easy, if the project failed, to unbar the doors. But would unbarring the doors bring back the seamen and artificers who had gone into foreign service ? Would it fit out ships which had mouldered away ? Would it restore capital which had been lost ? Would it replace the produce of American industry, which had rotted in the fisherman's or farmer's hands ?

Again : Did this experimental politician, before he gave his vote to tie up the hands of labour and subject honest families to ruin, did he ascertain the practicability of getting other *such* politicians to vote with him, when he should grow sick of the president's project ? Might not his colleague (even if disposed to indulge his fancy, and let him amuse himself with such toys as the agriculture and commerce of an empire) might not his colleague have entertained some little doubt whether other folks would agree to give over the game, when it began to grind the face and pinch the belly of his constituents ? And even if it were admitted that a majority of each house, had they continued a little longer in session, would have agreed to take off the Embargo, is it certain that the



president would abandon his project? If not, how does it appear that the measure was so completely in the power of the Honourable Senator Adams? Had he, indeed, been content with laying an Embargo for a limited time, he might, on a question for the renewal, have exercised his judgment and used his power. Two thirds of each House would not, then, have been required to unbar the doors. In that case, if a temporary Embargo had been laid, and the necessity or propriety of continuing it should have become evident, a bare majority would have been competent to prolong the term. Now the law having laid a permanent Embargo, if it be constitutional (which we deny) it is in the power of the President, with a minority in either house of Congress (provided it exceed one third) to keep these doors shut, barred and bolted for the threatened term of three years, and as much longer as he and his minority please. Is it possible that a consideration of this sort, which absolutely intrudes itself on the notice of a cursory observer, could have escaped the penetration of the Honourable Mr. John Q. Adams? Surely it could not. And here our readers are requested to take notice, that if the French emperor had given orders to prohibit commerce with England, during his pleasure, a temporary Embargo could not have been considered either as a formal or substantial obedience. Not so a perpetual Embargo. This, having all the merit of submission to the imperial mandate, may serve as a proper ground on which to supplicate imperial mercy. Amended and fortified as it at length is, with land Embargo Supplements, it cuts off all commercial intercourse with the British dominions.

And now, since this measure is confessedly aimed at England let us examine its effects. And here we have fresh cause to admire the wisdom of our councils. Lost, as we all were, in wonder, at that sublime policy which would aid the candidate for universal empire by weakening the opposition and removing (as far as lies in our power) every obstacle to the accomplishment of his wish; astonished at the profound sagacity of those *honest patriots*, who, to support the honour and independence of our country, not only pay to France the tribute of their applause, and (in the just measure and true spirit of republican œconomy) the tribute still more precious, of their coin, but even exert themselves to break the only mound that now restrains a torrent which has laid waste the fields and laid low the kingdoms and the states of Europe; a torrent, by which, but for that mound, we should be overwhelmed; our laws, our liberties, our property, our religion, our wealth, and our very name, swept away and swallowed

up in the ocean of oblivion. Amazed at such a profundity of views, such a height and depth of awful combination, in the mind of that political pope, whose infallibility is the first if not the only article of faith with those friends of the Honourable Senator who were his father's foes; it seemed impossible to wind up our mental powers to a greater sublimity of reverential awe. But how feeble is the conception of that frail creature man! At sight of the Embargo, at the appearance of an instrument so well contrived to pull down the pride of Britain, and lay her councils prostrate at our feet, we were astounded. Its first effect is, that we, her only commercial rival, retiring from the ocean, leave in her hands the commerce of the world. Its second effect is, to recruit her navy with at least ten thousand seamen which were in our service. Its third effect is (by starvation) to bring under her sway the islands which yet belong to her enemy. Its fourth effect is, to send our ship-carpenters, rope-makers, sail-makers, and all who are concerned in the building and fitting of ships, to her trading cities in our neighbourhood. Its fifth effect is, to force our fishermen to exercise their art under her flag, and for her benefit. Its sixth effect is, to give a spring to the culture of her colonies, so as to secure, in a short time, the means of feeding her islands with articles formerly supplied by the industry of our farmers; and thereby to emancipate those islands from their dependence on us. Finally, its seventh effect is, to induce many of our citizens to abandon farms which they bought on credit, but cannot now pay for, and settle in Canada and Nova-Scotia. These seven consequences of the Embargo, these seven vials of wrath poured out on our own heads, these seven deadly sins of American policy, cannot but endear the measure to England. If, therefore, those who preside over her councils have any thing in them of gratitude or generosity, they will give thanks and rewards to the father and friends of this hopeful project. To the kindness and bounty of Britain we recommend them; and should she in her goodness take them to herself, we shall esteem it a signal favour. God knows we have had enough of them and of their projects.

We have promised to consider the measure of retaliation, in the Orders of the British Council so loudly complained of. The Hon. Senator has attempted to justify the Berlin Decree of the twenty-first of November 1806, as a retaliation of the rule adopted in British Admiralty Courts in the war of 1756.\*

\* The great importance of this subject seems to demand the introduc-



This may be called visiting the sins of the fathers on the heads of their children. The principle of that rule we shall not examine because we consider it as being at variance with established maxims ; and because Great Britain has not maintained it in her general practice. She has resorted to it occasionally to justify acts inconsistent with rights claimed by neutral nations ; but (as we have already mentioned) at the time of the Berlin Decree, the only exceptions to an undefined liberty of commerce were, 1st, the case of contraband, about which there is no dispute : 2nd, the case of actual blockade by a force sufficient to render access to the port blockaded difficult and dangerous ; on which also there is no dispute, except as to the circumstances of notice, amount of force and the like, being mere questions of fact, which do not affect the principle : and 3d, the case of a direct commerce between the colonies of a belligerent and their mother country. This restriction has been submitted to in practice generally, and in principle by the present American administration particularly. Mr. Madison in his letter to Messrs. Monroe and Pinckney, of the 7th May, 1806, says :

tion here of the following Extract from

*Valin's ORDONNANCES of Louis XIV.—1704, 23d July.*

*Article VI. page 248—252.*

Vessels appertaining to the subjects of neutral countries, which have departed from the ports of an enemy of his Majesty, and shall have *there* loaded in *whole* or in *part*, to go to ports of any other Prince than *their own*, whether allies of his Majesty, neutral or enemies, may be arrested and brought into the realm, and shall be declared good prize, with their cargoes, *even* though they are loaded for account of subjects of his Majesty, neutrals, or allies.

*Article IV. same Ordonnance.*

It is forbidden to stop vessels belonging to neutrals coming from the ports of an ally, or neutrals going to an enemy's port, **PROVIDED** there are not in said vessels any contraband articles, or **ARTICLES** of the **GROWTH** or fabrick of his Majesty's enemies, in **WHICH** case, the merchandise shall be good prize, and the vessels released.

*Article VII.*

Thus enemies' goods subject the ship which carries them, to confiscation, and *all the rest of the cargo*, whether these belong to friends, allies or neutrals ; because it is to favour in one manner or another the *commerce of the enemy*, and *facilitates the transport* of his provisions and merchandise.

It goes on to remark, that even if the neutral did not *know the fact*, the property is nevertheless good prize, *his own* as well as the enemy's.

It is true, says Valin, this *jurisprudence* (or *injustice*) is peculiar to *France and Spain*, and that in *other countries* they only *seize* enemies' goods, and pay freight to the neutral.

*Article XI.—page 264 et suivantes.*

We have reflected *a little too late*, perhaps, in France, on the carrying on our trade in time of war in the ships of neutrals, as if we were in profound peace, and it is only in this war that we have thought *seriously* of making regulations under which neutrals may carry on commerce with our enemies.

The first object is to consider the *proof of neutrality*. For of what avail would be neutrality, if neutrals could presume to use ships which in truth belong to enemies?



“The abuses which have been committed by Great Britain, under the *pretext* that a neutral trade from enemy’s colonies through neutral ports was a *direct* trade, render it indispensable to guard against such a *pretext*, by some express declaration on that point.—The most that can be conceded on the part of the United States is, that the *landing* the goods, the *securing* the duties, and the *change of the ship*, or preferably, the landing of the goods alone, or with the securing the duties, shall be requisite to destroy the identity of the voyage, and the directness of the trade.”

Although we cannot agree, that the United States ought to give up the principle, that property going from our ports, in our own ships, shall be free from capture, whatever may have been the antecedent circumstances, yet in candour we feel ourselves bound to acknowledge that the ground on which our rulers proceeded is, in some respects, solid.

The law of nations consists in general of the principles of reason and justice, applied to the subject on which any question may arise. But there is, moreover, a conventional law of nations, being the purport of certain general agreements among particular nations.—Thus from the general principle, that the victor, having over the conquered an unlimited power of life and death, might if he pleased, reduce his prisoners to slavery, christians have made a great exception. The pow-

To regulate this point, several things have been settled. By the following decree, 21st Oct. 1744, the king having had represented to him the decree of 23d July, 1704, concerning prizes, and the navigation of neutrals and allies pending the war, his majesty would have admitted the same to be wise and suitable, and that it would be for the good of his realm, that they should all be renewed in the present war; but, as they do not agree with some treaties which his majesty has made with certain powers, which he is determined to regard with scrupulous fidelity:—Therefore decreed:

1. Ships going from a *neutral* port, and loaded with their *own* articles, of *their* growth, may go even to enemies’ ports.

2. Ships going even from an enemy’s port loaded with any produce not belonging to enemies, may *return* to their *own* ports.

3. Any vessel bound from one *neutral* port to another neutral port may go freely, if *she* is *not* laden with goods the *growth* or manufacture of the enemy, in which latter case the goods shall be *good prize*, and the vessel released.

4. So if a neutral ship depart from a port of his Majesty or his allies, and is laden with goods the *growth* or manufacture of his enemies, the goods shall be lawful prize.

Article 6 declares, that, to *remove all doubt*, all neutral vessels going from an *enemy’s* port, and which shall there have loaded in *whole* or in *part*, and destined to *any other* country than the one to which such neutral belongs, whether an ally of his majesty, neutral or enemy, may be seized, brought in and declared good prize, with their cargoes, though *loaded on the account of allies or of neutrals*.

The foregoing extracts are either literal translations, or passages condensed for the sake of brevity, preserving strictly the idea of the author,

er is restrained to the period of resistance. From the moment of submission, it becomes a duty to spare, and finally to restore to their country, the captives made in war. To mention all the conventional articles, in publick law, would require a volume : they are of various kinds, some of which extend the rights of hostility ; or, in other words, abridge the rights of neutrality : for the rights of war between the belligerents themselves (as laid down by the most respected writers) cannot be extended ; seeing that they go to the complete extermination of the conquered.—This was no uncommon practice among the nations of antiquity. The general (and we may indeed say the universal) practice of nations which have colonies, to confine the commerce of those colonies to the parent state, formed by itself, and in its effects, a part of that conventional law. A flippant sophist may pretend that the United States cannot be bound by this convention, to which they never assented ; but the answer of Europe is simple and conclusive : Those who claim to be members of a society, and enjoy the benefit of its laws, must submit to those laws—to all those laws ; since otherwise each member might prescribe his own convenience as a rule to every other. Besides, we have in some sort assented to this very compact. In our treaties with the nations of Europe, we agree to reciprocal principles and regulations respecting all *our* ports and their *European* ports ; excepting from the *general principle*, and making *special provision* for *their colonies* : nay, agreeing to particular stipulations for the *privileges* allowed to us in the colonial trade. From this conventional law it has resulted, that belligerents have assumed (and perhaps justly) the right to insist that property carried to and fro between the mother country and its colonies is the property of an enemy. To the offer of evidence when claimed as neutral, they reply that such evidence is unworthy of notice ; because it must consist either of the official papers issued by the enemy, which in the state of war, and framed so as to cover goods from hostile pursuit, prove nothing ; or of the deposition of witnesses, some of which may easily be deceived into a belief of what is not true, and the others, who (from the necessity of the case) are admitted to a knowledge of the transaction, are interested in concealing the truth, and have engaged in or been employed to carry on the trade, because they are not scrupulous about oaths. That such direct trade may, if permitted, be prosecuted on account of the enemy, no man will have the hardihood to deny : and perhaps it is for the general interests of mankind that a traffick which involves the breach of oaths should be



inhibited. Certain it is, that France, in the sense of her naval inferiority, and in the consciousness that she would not justify or could not prevail on other nations to assert the claim that during war neutrals should be allowed to carry on her trade with her colonies, took a different course. She has laboured unremittingly to establish (by general agreement) the principle that *free ships shall make free goods*. A convention to which the nation most powerful at sea will never consent; and which, if made, would be broken by France whenever it should suit her views. Of this we have complete evidence. Nay, we assert, and defy contradiction, that (within the last twenty years) France has constantly violated every principle of publick law, and every treaty which stood in her way. If the Honourable Senator entertains a different opinion, let him cite the single instance wherein she has respected either her publick faith pledged by treaty, or the principles of reason and justice, when it suited her interest to set them at nought.

We say then, in justification of our rulers (or at least in palliation, if we are right in our opinion that they have conceded an important right of sovereignty) that they may have agreed with Great Britain as to the direct trade between colonies and the mother country; and may, from a sense of justice, as well as to avoid a conflict of claims where there is no common judge, have assented to the principle that merely to enter a port of the United States, in going from Martinique to France, does not break the continuity of the voyage: that, to every essential or important purpose, it is a direct voyage from Martinique to France, as much as a voyage to the Cape of Good Hope or Isle of France and thence to Canton is a direct voyage to China. It is evident that, unless in this single instance, we had agreed to no infraction of our rights by Great Britain; and that it was in this instance a matter of question whether she had gone beyond the true line. But admitting that she had, the wrong done was little, if at all, injurious to France.

We pray it may be constantly kept in mind, that the right of France to limit our commerce, in a manner not justified by publick law, could arise only from our submission to encroachments on our rights by her enemy, in a manner injurious to her. As to the fanciful doctrine of the Honourable Senator, that the rule of 1756, by extending the theatre of hostility, violated the rights of war as between the belligerents, it may be a good theme for boys to debate about by way of sharpening their wits, but it is unworthy the notice of men. It is, besides, a matter which neutrals have nothing to do with,



unless called on to join in a crusade against Great Britain (under the banners of that pious Christian and kind creature Napoleon) to restore the rights of humanity to their "temple in the heart of kings." What is it to us whether the rule of 1756 was a crime greater than if Charles Fox had hired an assassin to stab the French Emperor? The Honourable Senator says it is. Let it then, in complaisance to him, be so set down. But if Fox, or his successor in office, had hired a hundred assassins to cut off the whole Corsican race, would any of *them* have been justified, by that atrocity, in plundering us? How in the name of sense can we be answerable for the vices of Charles Fox, or assume merit for his virtues?

There are men who will say that neutrals have a right to insist on the principle of free ships free goods: and that the relinquishment of our rights to cover French goods against the pursuit of her enemy, will justify her in a measure of retaliation. To this it may be proper to reply:

First, that the pretended right has no existence, and that France has acknowledged this by making (with us) a special stipulation to that effect: Secondly, that this pretended right can exist only as an extension of the protection given to the property of an enemy in a neutral country. But France has made it the invariable practice to seize goods of her enemy, *even in neutral countries*; which (whatever may be her verbal claims or pretences) amounts to an actual abandonment of the *alleged* principle, as to ships, while it is a violation of the *acknowledged* principle as to territory: from which alone the assumption of the principle as to ships can be derived.—Thirdly, France has violated, with respect to us, *this very stipulation in her own treaty*, and justified the violation on the ground, that it was injurious to her interest that British property should be secured on board of our ships, while French property was insecure, and therefore she would not observe the stipulations of her treaty, which were unreasonable and burthensome.

But we will suppose, for argument's sake, that the principle *free ships free goods* is a principle of publick law, altho' the very contrary is the truth. It would follow, that if we permitted one of the belligerents to violate it, in regard to us, the other belligerent would have the same right. That our submission to the wrong done by one, would give to the other a right to commit the same act. This we acknowledge to be a rule of right reason, derived from the duty of neutrals to deal equally between the belligerents, not withholding from one what is granted to the other, nor imposing restraints on

one, not imposed on the other, unless in execution of an antecedent treaty. But should either of the belligerents go farther in retaliation than the original wrong, it would be a violation of our rights as complete as the primary violation by his adversary, and would (if submitted to by us) give that adversary a perfect right to commit the same acts. It is proper to note, as we go along, that, in the present condition of mankind, the word *neutral*, in the orders and decrees of the powers at war, can mean only American; we being now the only neutrals left; if indeed we can be called neutral, when France seizes and confiscates our goods, takes and destroys our ships, and insists that we shall "declare war against her enemy,——or——"

From what has been said it will appear that the Berlin Decree was not founded on any act of Great Britain submitted to by us, and that if we had permitted a violation of our rights, in a manner injurious to France, she could not thereby acquire a right to exceed the measure of what we had so submitted to. But the Berlin Decree not only exceeded every thing which Britain had ever done or pretended to do, but whatever had been previously attempted, as far as our information extends, by any nation in modern times. When this Decree reached London, the American ministers were told frankly and distinctly,

‘ That in case the United States submitted to a violation of their neutral rights by France, in the manner contemplated by that Decree, it would be impossible for Great Britain to respect them.’

This Decree was issued at Berlin on the twenty-first day of November, 1806, and yet the Honourable Senator complains that the British Orders, consequent on our submission to France, and which were not issued till November, 1807, were sudden, unexpected, and that they *burst* all at once, &c. It is true some correspondence took place between the American Minister at Paris and the French Ministers, which induced the former to believe the Decree was not to take effect against us. The President declared this to be the case, and it was supposed by credulous people that all was safe. Discreet men, however, placed little confidence in half way comments of Ministers, at variance with the imperial text. After the lapse of near twelve months, viz. on the 24th of September, the American Minister learnt that "constructions injurious to the United States, were about to be given to it," and applied to the Minister of Foreign Relations for information. To this the Minister replied, on the 7th of October, thus:

‘SIR—You did me the honour, on the 24th of September, to request me to send you some explanations as to the execution of the Decree of Blockade of the British Islands against vessels of the United States. The provisions of all the regulations and treaties, relative to a state of blockade, have appeared applicable to the existing circumstances ; and it results from the explanations which have been addressed to me by the Imperial Advocate General of the Council of Prizes, that *his majesty has considered every neutral vessel going from English ports with cargoes of English merchandise or of English origin as lawfully seizable by French armed vessels.*”

Without stopping to inquire whether General Armstrong was duped by insidious or deceived by false assertions, it is evident that the decree was levelled against us. Indeed, it could hit nobody else ; for as Mr. Champagny tells the General, in the same letter, “ the principal powers of Europe (far from protesting against its provisions) have adopted them.” By the by, this reasoning, addressed to us, was equally delicate and conclusive. It is (in other words) *the states which we have subdued have done as we bid them ; you ought to imitate their example.* The right of Great-Britain to retaliate this Berlin Decree, if not resisted by us, was unquestionable. To have been a quiet spectator, with a thousand ships of war at her command, and permitted neutrals to trade with her enemy when that enemy had prohibited them from trading with her, *under pain of confiscation*, would have been an extreme of folly. It cannot be pretended that she was precipitate in retaliating. It wanted but ten days of a year from the time the Berlin Decree was issued, to the date of her Orders. Was her retaliation severe ? Did it entrench more on our rights than the French Decree ? Certainly not. Far from prohibiting our trade with French ports, generally, all except those of Europe were left open to us. Far from making immediate prize of vessels bound to the blockaded ports, full time was allowed for information. Far from interdicting the commerce with Europe, absolutely, it was allowed under certain conditions. Of these conditions we shall not say much, although much has been said by the Honourable Senator. He has taken occasion to indulge in declamations on British license, British taxation and the like, declaring that if we submit to the execution of those orders, we become Colonies of England : but not reflecting that a like submission to the severer French Decree must, according to his own doctrine, have already reduced us to the state of French Provinces. If



England had the right to *inhibit* the trade *absolutely*, she had a right to *permit* it *conditionally*. If she had not, it is our business to resist by such means as may be in our power. In this case we are reduced to the option of declaring war against the first or the second aggressor, or of submitting to both : for we hold that the dignified retirement so much talked of is an actual submission to both. France declares, and is joined by her tributary powers, that if we trade with England we shall be made prize of ; and England declares the same thing if we trade with France and her tributary powers, comprising in effect the Continent of Europe. We lay an Embargo on all our ships, and therefore, in obedience to France, we decline trading with England ; and, in obedience to England, we decline trading with the Continent of Europe. So much for the dignity of our retiring system.

Having got so near the end of those alternations of hostility, which the Honourable Senator considers as sprouts from the root of the rule of 1756, it may not be amiss to give a glance at the last twigs.

The Milan Decree of the 17th December last, in retaliation of the British Orders of the 11th of November preceding, recites (as a heinous offence) that neutral vessels were not only subjected to search, but to be compulsorily detained in England, and even to *have a tax laid* on them. It is worthy of remark that the French Emperor could not discover, in these Orders, all that confiscation which has furnished a doleful paragraph to our Honourable Senator. The reason of which we take to be, that little as the great Napoleon cares about the opinions men form of his heart, he is not quite so indifferent to what they may think of his understanding. Another thing worthy of remark is, that the French Emperor seems wholly to have forgotten how, by his Berlin Decree, neutrals trading with England were made liable to confiscation ; and condemns in terms of high resentment the imposition of *a tax* by England on the trade of neutrals with him and his allies. In this course he has been followed, with perfect exactness, by the Honourable Senator. His majesty then, in the plenitude of his power, confiscates American vessels, that shall have submitted to be searched by a British man of war, *on their voyage to his ports*, or those of his allies. This mild and equitable disposition is made of our property by his imperial majesty, lest the English should avail themselves of our tolerance "to establish the infamous principle that the flag of a nation does not cover goods." But then his majesty, in his great goodness, declares that this

Decree "shall cease to have any effect with respect to all nations who shall have the firmness to compel the English Government to respect their flag." That is to say, he will continue to make prize of all American property he can lay his hands on, unless we go to war with England. But, says the Honourable Senator, *the French Emperor has not declared there should be no neutrals.*

One would think the language of this Milan Decree sufficiently clear and distinct ; whether General Armstrong thought it could be explained away, we know not. His correspondence has been withheld. But we have Mr. Champagny's letter, of January, which mentions different notes received from the general and laid before his majesty. In his answer it is said :

' No recourse against the power of England is any longer  
' to be found *in the ordinary means* of repression. In order  
' to annoy her it is become necessary to turn against her the  
' arms which she makes use of herself.—The United States,  
' more than any power, have to complain of the aggressions of  
' England. In the situation in which England has placed the  
' continent, *especially since her Decree of the 11th Novem-*  
' *ber*, his Majesty has no doubt of a declaration of war against  
' her by the United States. In that persuasion his Majesty,  
' ready to consider the United States *as associated with the*  
' *cause* of all the powers who have to defend themselves a-  
' gainst England, has not taken any definitive measure respect-  
' ing the American vessels which have been brought into his  
' ports. He has ordered that they should remain *sequestered*,  
' until a decision may be had thereon *according to the disposi-*  
' *tion* which shall have been expressed *by the government of*  
' *the United States.*'

" Still however," says Adams, " his Imperial Majesty has not declared there shall be no neutrals." He has not required that we should shut our ports against the English—No : He only considers us *at war* with his enemy, and is ready to consider us as associated with all the powers who have shut their ports against the English, and in the mean time, *until we declare war for ourselves*, he will take all American property which comes within his reach ; and *if we do not declare war against England*, he will confiscate it—that's all. So far is he from declaring there shall be no neutrals, that he will only make war upon us if we do not make war upon England—that's all. If we choose to call ourselves neutral, he has no sort of objection, but he will consider and treat us as enemies—that's all.

And now, fellow citizens, having gone through with our comments on this letter of Mr. John Q. Adams, which we consider in the light of a *manifesto* by our administration, it might be expected that we should endeavour to pour into your bosoms all that indignation which swells our own. But we forbear. If there be still any true born American who can adhere to the rotten cause which Mr. Adams has espoused, we leave him in the hands of Mr. Adams and his associates. And if the strong sentiment which binds us to our country would permit us to see without extreme concern, much less to wish, that evil should befall her, we might wish that men so blind should continue subject to that misrule, under which the wealth of America has been wasted, her dignity prostrated, her reputation lost, her prosperity dried up, her liberties invaded, and her independence sacrificed.











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